IRAN'S NUCLEAR MENACE—KENNETH TIMMERMAN

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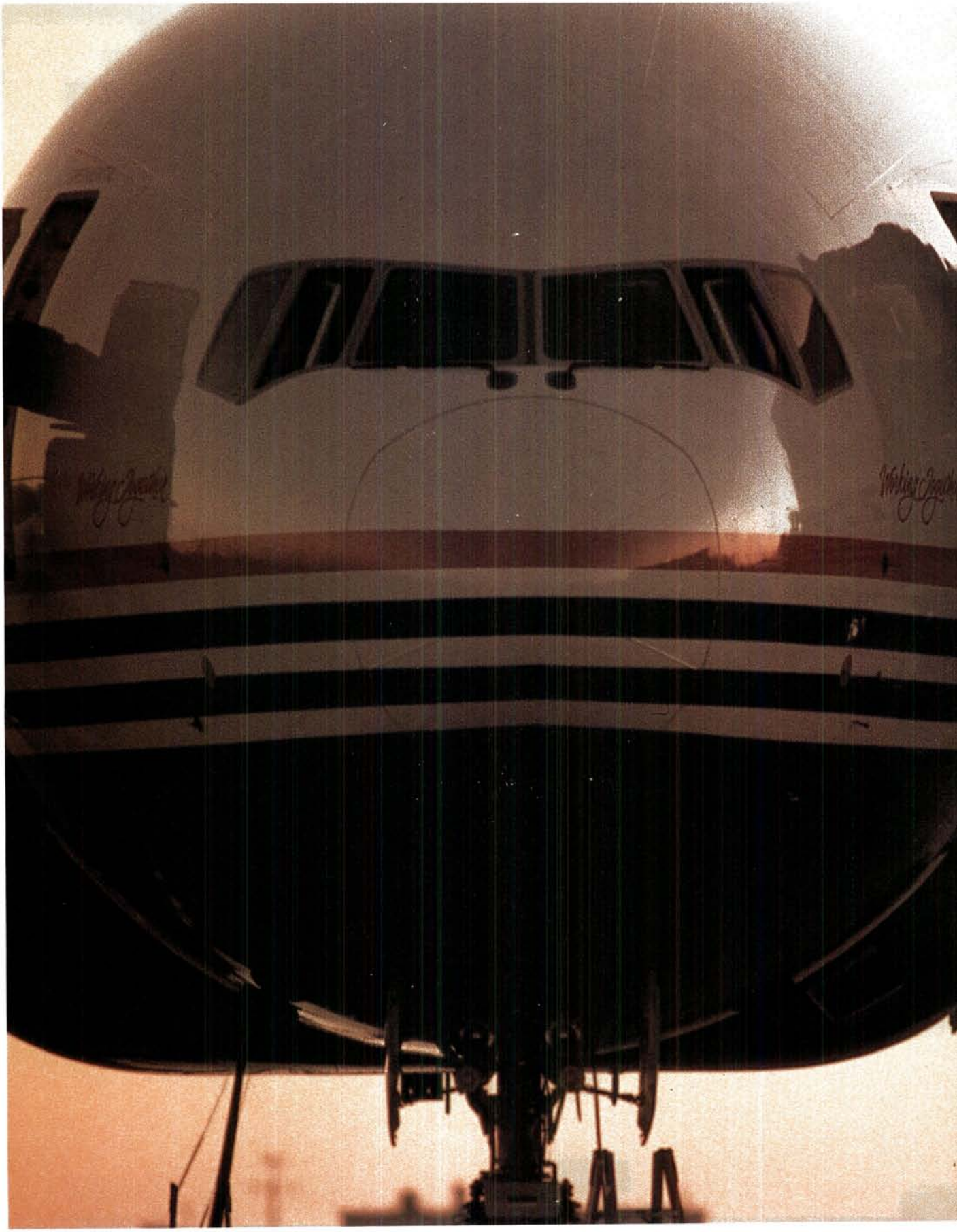

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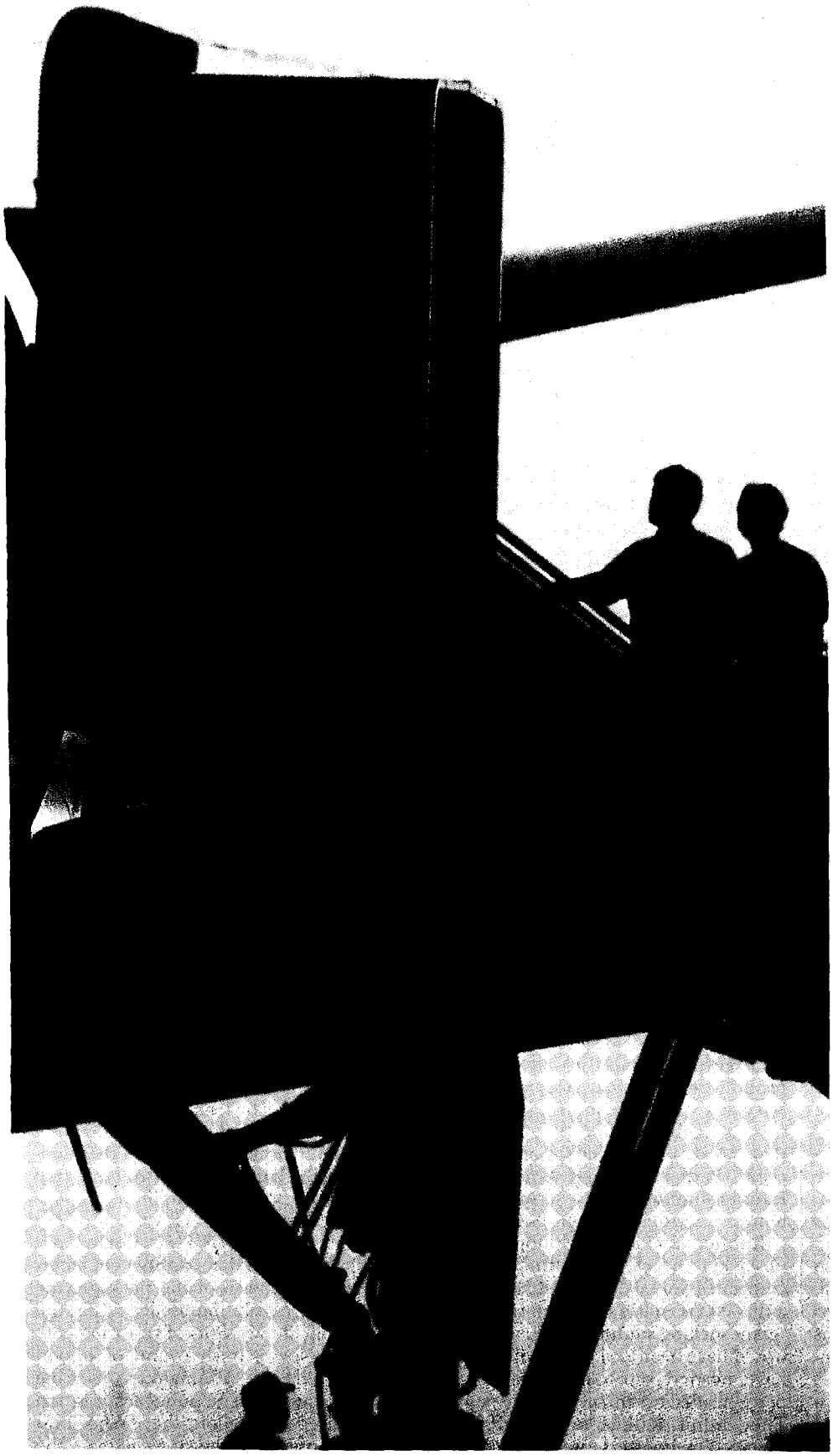

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FROM WASHINGTON

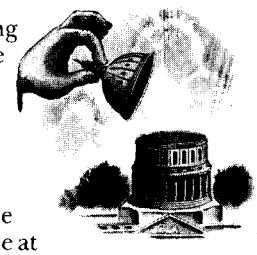
Let them eat hate

Alfonse D'Amato, chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, has been trying to cancel President Clinton's emergency loan package for Mexico. He says we should use the money at home, to "aid the communities that need it." For example, he says, "How about the District of Columbia?" Beg your pardon? D'Amato isn't exactly famous for brooding over America's urban woes, certainly not when they fall outside New York. Has he gone soft-hearted on us? Is that what happens when a 57-year-old Republican goon falls in love with a 44-year-old Democratic cuddle-bunny (TV personality Claudia Cohen, in case you missed their tell-all press conference)? Don't get your hopes up. The other loan program D'Amato is attacking these days is the Community Reinvestment Act, which encourages banks to lend in run-down urban areas, such as those that constitute much of the District of Columbia.

D'Amato's Mexico initiative seems to be going nowhere. But, thanks to the presidential campaign, its spirit will live on among big-name Republicans. Candidates Phil Gramm, Pete Wilson, Pat Buchanan and Arlen Specter have criticized a Mexican "bailout" to varying degrees. They are poised to apply the lesson taught by pioneering xenophobe Buchanan last time around, when the NAFTA debate was heating up: pandering to fear and loathing of Mexicans is a good way to reach the anxious and the unemployed in blue-collar America. And, like D'Amato, these candidates combine their red-meat appeal to the downtrodden with plans to do nothing in particular for the downtrodden. Republicans are no slouches when it comes to free-lunch populism, but this version is ingenious even by their own high standards. A "Let them eat hate" strategy.

Buchanan can at least claim consistency. The rest of the lot supported NAFTA. In the wake of the Mexican economic crisis, though, NAFTA's luster has rather dimmed, and bashing the loan package is about the closest a NAFTA supporter can come to erasing his ugly past.

Do NAFTA supporters (like me) really have anything to be ashamed of? Obviously, 1995 hasn't brought the post-NAFTA Mexico we had in mind. So it sounds vaguely plausible when columnist Robert Kuttner writes that, as Mexico crashes, "the credibility of NAFTA's cheerleaders ... deserves to crash with it." Well, before we get into that credibility question, what about the credibility of NAFTA's critics? Ross Perot is strutting around as if the Mexico of 1995 makes him some kind of Nostradamus. But as I recall, he envisioned a Mexico brimming with low-wage jobs; NAFTA was part of Mexico's strategy of "taking jobs from the United States." Today unemployment in Mexico is high and growing. If Mexicans "took" our jobs, they must have given them to someone else.



Perot's language—"taking jobs"—gets at the core of the debate. NAFTA's most vocal critics talked as if trade were a zero-sum game, in which Mexico's gains would be America's losses. NAFTA boosters conceded that some new Mexican jobs would come at the expense of American jobs—and vice versa—but said more jobs would be created than lost; a thriving Mexico would help America, and an impoverished Mexico would hurt. That was NAFTA's essential premise: non-zero-sumness. If you don't buy it, look around. The coming months of Mexican poverty will cut demand for American goods, boost illegal immigration and remind us that a prosperous neighbor is a good thing.

It may seem strange to invoke a post-NAFTA crisis as vindication of NAFTA's logic. Didn't NAFTA *cause* the crisis? We "cheerleaders" say no; a crash would almost certainly have come without NAFTA. Kuttner disagrees. The trade pact probably made the difference, he argued in a recent column. In that column he proudly recalled that one NAFTA critic, Jeff Faux of the Economic Policy Institute, actually *predicted* in a 1993 paper that "Mexico is heading for an economic crisis." Perhaps running short on space, Kuttner omitted the rest of that sentence: "... with or without NAFTA."

Kuttner also failed to note a larger obstacle to his claim that the peso crash vindicates NAFTA's critics: if the generic anti-NAFTA scenario had been right, and a "giant sucking sound" had ensued, there would have been no crash. Dollars would have headed south much faster than pesos headed north, bidding the peso up. They didn't. Rather, trade in 1994 did what NAFTA boosters predicted. It grew briskly and symmetrically—up 22 percent for U.S. exports, 24 percent for Mexican exports—and exerted no dramatic pressure on the peso in either direction.

To be sure, if then-President Carlos Salinas had gracefully devalued the peso by, say, 5 or 10 percent during his lame-duck months—as almost everyone expected and most NAFTA boosters hoped—reality would have been *slightly* closer to Perot's vision. Export growth would have tilted a bit more toward Mexico; the strong net job growth that NAFTA brought America in 1994 would have been dampened; and the peso would have had a firmer floor at its new level. But the fact remains that if Perot's fears of a massively asymmetrical trade flow had been right, Mexico could have gone without any devaluation at all. For Perot and his allies to claim the devaluation as vindication is an act of impressive cognitive dexterity.

Kuttner says NAFTA somehow "encouraged Mexico to keep its peso overvalued," thus setting the stage for a crash. Well, if anything encouraged this overvaluation, it was Mexican leaders banking on Perot's line about NAFTA's one-way effects. And I don't see how NAFTA supporters can be blamed for failing to foresee a Mexican political reaction whose premise they correctly deemed faulty. In any event, one thing *was* predictable: if NAFTA had been defeated in 1993, pressure on the peso would have been sudden and strong. The ensuing crisis—then, as now—would have been bad news for America. Those peasants now fleeing northward would still have fled. And, absent NAFTA's restorative powers, the flow would have persisted for a long, long time.

Opportunistically arousing resentment against people of a different nationality or race is never admirable, but Republicans should be doubly ashamed for doing it now. The key to the Mexican loan package is confidence in it. If investors believe Mexico can repay its loans, they'll keep investing, and Mexico won't default. The loan package will then have cost America nothing. Indeed, we'll have made money, contrary to the innuendo of Buchanan, D'Amato, et al. that we're *giving* Mexico $20 billion. Opposition to the congressional version of the loan package, led by Phil Gramm, did costly damage to that confidence. Lately the second version of the package, the one courageously imposed by Clinton, had finally shown signs of restoring confidence. Now a fresh round of opportunism, led by D'Amato, is scaring investors again. As Republicans position themselves to exploit the "Who Lost Mexico" question, they may become the answer.

ROBERT WRIGHT

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

APRIL 24, 1995

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CORRESPONDENCE

Going native

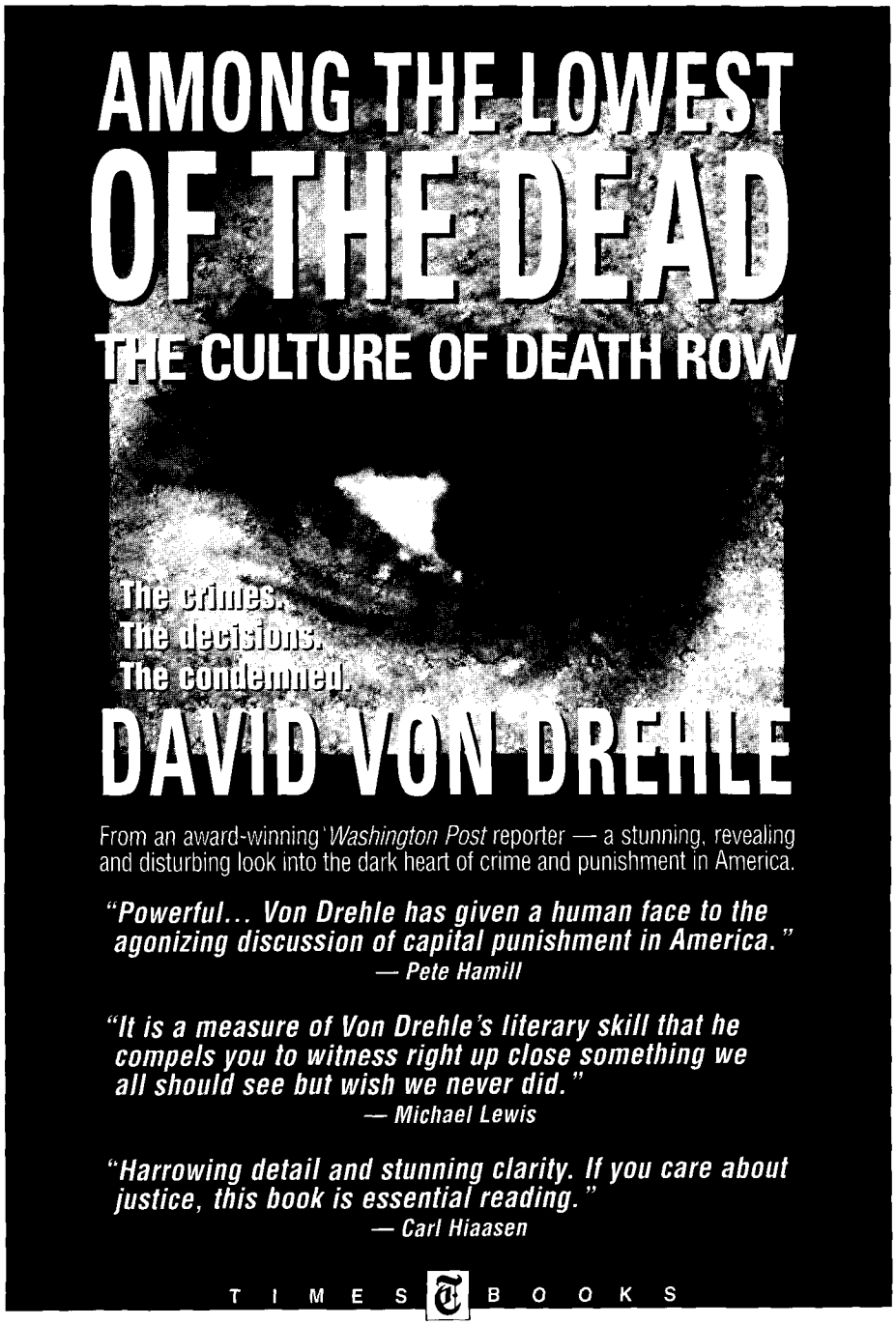
To the editors:

How honored I am to be made into a straw person by Michael Lind and John Judis ("For a New Nationalism," March 27).

They claim I am a "nativist" who believes that the United States must preserve its "European 'ethnic core.'" What I actually say, most recently in my book *Alien Nation*, is that while the American ethnic core is simply a matter of historical fact, the assimilation of any individual is always possible because nations are an interlacing of ethnicity and culture. (This is the position, incidentally, of their hero Theodore Roosevelt, who made both melting-pot and Anglo-Saxonist noises.)

But I don't mind. I quite realize that only by positing a right-wing bogeyman could Lind and Judis smuggle the profoundly important and subversive idea of an American nation-state into THE NEW REPUBLIC.

PETER BRIMELOW
New York, New York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TIMES BOOKS

To the editors:

John Judis and Michael Lind can count me among those who are "For a New Nationalism." But to their "pillars of the new nationalism"—centered on economic, defense and social policy—I would add environmental protection.

I envision a nation with clean air and safe drinking water available to all the population; of livable, safe, beautiful cities, with public spaces designed for people and not cars; with national parks and forests permanently protecting America's spectacular wild heritage. Because our lives are intimately bound up with the places we inhabit, a true patriotism involves love and concern for the land. It is no accident that the founder of the original "New Nationalism," Theodore Roosevelt, was also our greatest conservationist president.

PHILIP CAFARO
Brookline, Massachusetts

Too cool

To the editors:

Bruce Bawer ("How Cool is PBS?" March 27) fails to comment on the absence of commercial advertising breaks on PBS. In this respect, a Charlie Rose interview with Laura D'Andrea Tyson on PBS differs significantly from a comparable cable program that is interrupted every eight minutes by commercials.

The point is not merely that public TV spares viewers the incessant sales pitches for consumer products that are a mainstay of the broadcast and cable networks. Rather, with neither a dependable advertising revenue stream nor adequate support from public sources, it should come as no surprise that PBS's programming is reduced to poorly designed foreign language instruction and endless repeats of the Three Tenors singing showtunes. With Americans taxed only seventy-five cents each year for public broadcasting (about what I pay for a single day of cable service), the American public is getting what it pays for.

DAVID DURFEE
Emmaus, Pennsylvania

To the editors:

Bruce Bawer is disturbed that PBS is so politically correct. But this is something for which they are to be lauded and not ridiculed. More and more commercial stations are including shows about African Americans, Latinos and other minorities. PBS, however, is the only station that consistently has programming where different ethnicities interact rather than segregating themselves. Commercial stations center their programming around the race or ethnicity

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of people. PBS chooses to focus on their individuality and makes their race or ethnicity incidental rather then central to specific characters.

LISSA WEINBERGER
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

To the editors:
While I am a longtime fan of "This Old House," occasional reruns of "Fawlty Towers" and even Charlie Rose's conversations with himself, I have to agree with Bruce Bawer's assessment of PBS. Last week was pledge week for our four local PBS stations and the "John Tesh Live at Red Rocks" concert he mentions ran repeatedly on at least one of the stations every night, sometimes several nights in a row. What he fails to mention however is that along with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra the concert featured gymnastic interpretations of Tesh's music by Bart Conner and Nadia Comaneci.

JOSHUA MACK
Brooklyn, New York

Spies like us

To the editors:
In "Why Spy?" (March 27) Charles Lane gives some reasons why the CIA should not engage in industrial spying. One he does not mention is that for the CIA to be able to do such spying competently it would also, in effect, have to spy on U.S. companies as well. First, it would have to know what U.S. firms are up to and what their industrial capabilities are in order to have some basis for comparison to foreign firms. Second, the increasingly international ownership of many major corporations inevitably means that much of the equity in "foreign" firms may be owned by Americans. How is the CIA to tell which firm to help: a foreign-owned firm with much of its industrial operations in the United States or a U.S.-owned firm with most of its industrial operations abroad?

BRUCE BARTLETT
Alexandria, Virginia

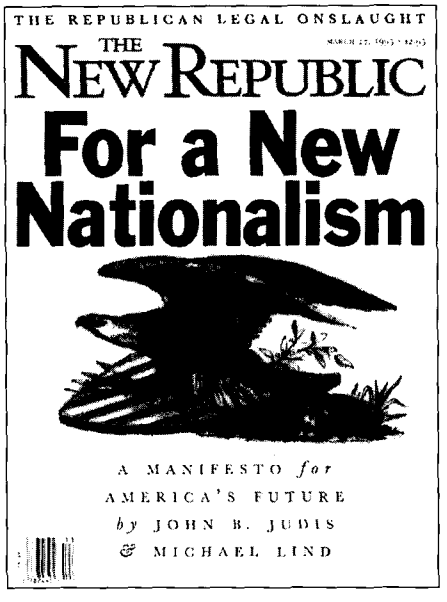
Beetle juice

To the editors:
Jacob Heilbrunn, in his review ("The Old Boy at War," March 27) of *Gentleman Spy: The Life of Allen Dulles*, refers to "the head of the fledgling CIA, General Walter 'Beedle' Smith." Actually, General Smith's middle name was Bedell, while the nickname was "Beetle." This may be nit-picking, but the historical record should be set straight.

STANLEY SANDLER
Fort Bragg, North Carolina

To the editors:
I am gratified at the long and serious attention Jacob Heilbrunn devoted to my biography of Allen Dulles, *Gentleman Spy*. However, the review contains one serious error of fact.

Heilbrunn writes: "So extensive were his German connections that Dulles even secured a private audience with the Füehrer in April 1933." This is not true, neither literally nor in its implied import. Dulles did indeed meet Hitler on April 8, 1933, two weeks after the *Gleichshaltung*, but the account is clear that his function was to take notes and carry the briefcase for Norman Davis, a prominent American diplomat of the day. As far as I could determine, Dulles took no part in the rambling discussion, and Hitler paid no notice whatever to his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For a New Nationalism
A MANIFESTO for AMERICA'S FUTURE
by JOHN B. JUDIS & MICHAEL LIND

official visitor's young aide (though he later dismissed Davis as a "petty profiteer"). Dulles himself scarcely remembered the episode.

The archival and popular literature on the Dulles brothers' involvement with Germany, before and after the Nazi takeover, is vast and frustrating, a setup for whatever spin one wants to invoke. Charges of "shady dealings" were raised by his Democratic opposition in John Foster Dulles's unsuccessful run for the Senate in 1949 and have been periodically revived ever since in support of Wall Street conspiracy theories. The Dulles retort—that they were simply lawyers representing their American business clients—is equally unenlightening. The spin chosen decides the story told.

PETER GROSE
New York, New York

Jacob Heilbrunn replies:
Peter Grose is right. I did not mean to suggest that Dulles singlehandedly secured a meeting with Hitler, though I do take a somewhat more skeptical view of both the Dulles brothers' dealings with the Nazi regime than does Grose.

Class dismissed

To the editors:
After reading Mickey Kaus's "Class Is In," (TRB, March 27), I agree that a compromise is needed on affirmative action. Yet I disagree that class-based affirmative action might be a good start. Kaus failed to address the most important issue in the class-based affirmative action debate: Does race transcend class in the first place?

If affirmative action is about compensating for the wrongs of history, we must examine this issue closely. Black people in the United States have always been objectified beyond their class position. As Clarence Walker of U.C.-Davis argues, racist social relations have always have had different cultural consequences from class relations. In the South, despite the similar class backgrounds of poor whites and blacks, blacks were subject to vicious racist treatment. After emancipation, wealthy Northern blacks were still excluded from all of mainstream society. Today, middle-class black families are still called by racial slurs as they try to move into white neighborhoods.

MATT ENGEL
Northfield, Minnesota

The plot thickens

To the editors:
Did Carroll Quigley's "dark, conspiratorial streak" extend to his writings on THE NEW REPUBLIC? (Notebook, March 27) In *Tragedy and Hope*, the late Professor Quigley wrote that "the [J.P.] Morgan firm decided to infiltrate the left-wing political movements in the United States.... The best example of this alliance of Wall Street and left-wing publication was THE NEW REPUBLIC, a magazine founded by Willard Straight, using Payne Whitney money, in 1914." Nefarious indeed!

ROBERT LIPSCOMB
Glendale, California

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

APRIL 24, 1995

TIME TO TALK TURKEY

A fortnight ago, Turkey launched its latest assault in its interminable war against the Kurdish separatists of eastern Anatolia. It was the largest military operation in Turkish history. Thirty-five thousand troops, backed by U.S.-made M-60 tanks, F-4 fighter jets and Black Hawk helicopters, invaded northern Iraq in pursuit of guerrillas from the PKK, the radical Kurdish rebel movement. Making a mockery of the allied efforts during Operation Provide Comfort, Turkey has now turned the Kurdish "safe haven" area established after the Gulf war into a war zone. Reports indicate that most PKK guerrillas have fled the area and left civilians and refugees to endure the onslaught.

While Germany and France have denounced the Turkish invasion, the Clinton administration, unsurprisingly, has taken the easy way out. Told by Tansu Ciller, the Turkish prime minister, about the assault, the president expressed "understanding for Turkey's need to deal decisively" with the PKK. This is, to put it mildly, an inadequate response. A Turkish military junta already given free rein by the weak and disingenuous Ciller—"This is not our making," she told the BBC—will lose any remaining sense of restraint if it believes itself immune from Western criticism. Indeed, any attempt at settling the Turkish civil war must include an end to military dominance over Kurdish policy.

Much as the Turkish military claims that it is all that stands between Ankara and a Kurdish republic, so, too, has the Turkish government justified its Kurdish war by claiming that it is all that stands between the West and rampant fundamentalism. Both claims are based on myth. What the military needs to be told by Ankara, and what Ankara needs to be told by the West, is that oppression is the father of rebellion, and that it is foolish to conceive of Turkey's future, at home and abroad, as separable from the future of the Kurds.

The truth is, no real resolution to the Kurdish question is likely without Ankara's fundamental recognition of the Kurdish nation. The Kurds are an ancient, ethnically distinct people whose homeland straddles the modern borders of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. Throughout history, they have tried and failed to establish a state of their own. Though no neighbor has ever welcomed that prospect, none has tried harder to eliminate the Kurdish identity than Turkey. The history of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey is really the history of the war of two nationalisms—Kurdish and Kemalist—ever since the founding of modern Turkey in 1923. The revival of the "sick man of Europe" was predicated upon a blind devotion to the new ethic of secular statism. Any other identity, religious or ethnic, was viewed as a fatal threat to the state.

No group presented a greater challenge to the Kemalist vision than the Kurds, and no group has suffered as much for its temerity. The Kurdish region has been systematically depopulated and impoverished; thousands of villages have been evacuated and razed; any public expression of the Kurdish language or culture is punishable under sedition laws that can carry a death sentence; and more than one-third of Turkey's 15 million Kurds have been deported to other regions of Turkey.

Within the past decade 15,000 people have been killed in the Turkish civil war. In the past year alone, the Turkish regime has banned the Kurdish party and sent its eight members of parliament to prison for advocating a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question. It has charged Turkey's most famous author, Yasar Kemal, with sedition for writing about the oppression of the Kurds.

It's time for Turkey to realize that it is a country of two cultures, two identities, which can co-exist within the framework of a bicultural Turkish state. The vast majority of Kurds do not support the PKK and would settle for cultural autonomy within existing boundaries. And it's time for Turkey's allies to call Ankara's bluff and present a diplomatic solution to its civil war. Only then will Turkey become a true bulwark against the fundamentalism into whose arms it has driven millions of Turks and Kurds, and become an example of secular democracy to the Muslim world. And only then will it deserve to be called an ally. •

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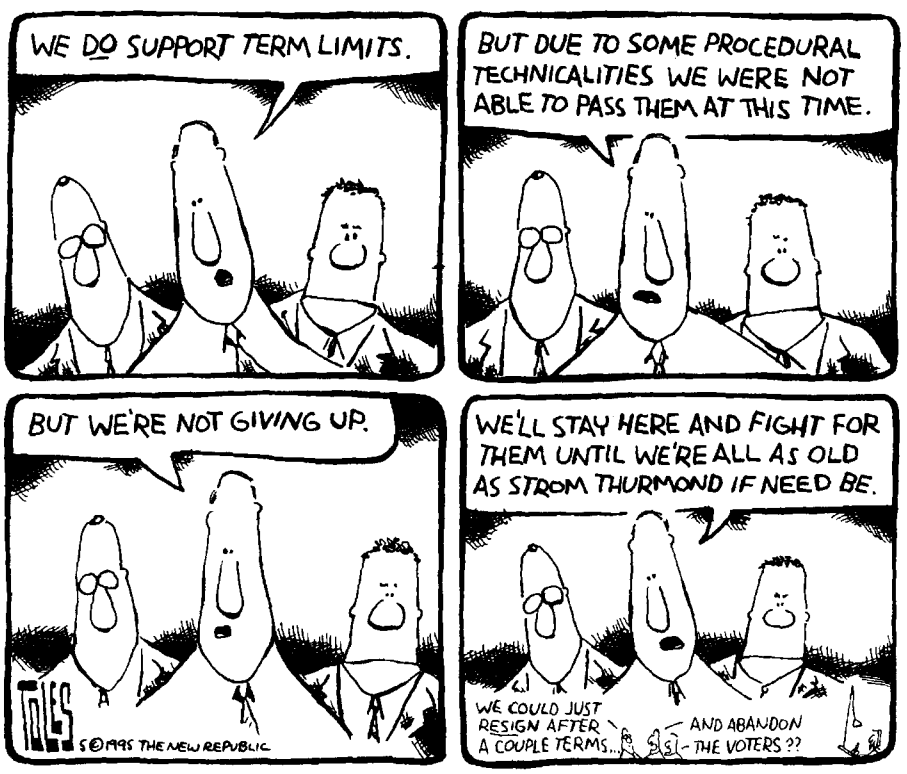
NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: Department of Transportation employees told a congressional subcommittee that a department training program consisted of men being sexually groped, women sobbing for hours, blacks and whites exchanging racial epithets, an obese woman being labeled "muffin queen" and employees being tied to one another for hours or forced to strip to their underwear and reveal personal problems. The courses covered "management skills and diversity awareness."... Michael Lee of Durango, Colorado, went to court for shooting his brother Charles in the head during an argument over the family Bible.... Faulkner County, Arkansas, Deputy Scott Roberts said, "That horse didn't have a chance," after Thomas Burdess was arrested for trying to teach his horse to lead by tying it to his truck and driving down a gravel road. The horse did not survive the lesson.... Nebraska Auditor John Breslow found fault with the state's health department for paying a consultant $200 an hour, totaling $239,585. The consultant's project was to find ways for the government to save money.... Tampa, Florida's University Community Hospital, which in the past month has faced lawsuits for amputating one patient's good leg and killing another after accidentally removing his ventilator, now faces a third suit for removing a patient's healthy ovary, leaving behind her diseased one.... Texarkana, Arkansas, passed a city ordinance that would fine residents $500 for whistling or singing in public after 10:30 p.m.


WE DO SUPPORT TERM LIMITS.
BUT DUE TO SOME PROCEDURAL TECHNICALITIES WE WERE NOT ABLE TO PASS THEM AT THIS TIME.
BUT WE'RE NOT GIVING UP.
WE'LL STAY HERE AND FIGHT FOR THEM UNTIL WE'RE ALL AS OLD AS STROM THURMOND IF NEED BE.
WE COULD JUST RESIGN AFTER A COUPLE TERMS...
AND ABANDON THE VOTERS??
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THERE'LL ALWAYS BE AN ENGLAND: *The Economist* may come off as a somewhat sober publication—"Special Report on the Pakistani Semiconductor Industry!"—but its editors clearly have a whale of a time. Stephen Milligan, a former editor turned British member of parliament, suffered the tragic fate of being found dead on his kitchen table, wearing fishnet stockings and with a plastic bag tied over his head and half an orange in his mouth after a failed attempt at ecstatic autoeroticism. The wonderfully named Rupert Pennant-Rea, the last editor of *The Economist*, was forced to resign two weeks ago as deputy governor of the Bank of England because a jilted lover revealed details of his sexual adventurism on the carpet in the governor's office. It all goes to show how English public dourness is often a disguise for unbridled private libertinism. We look forward to a future survey on retailing in Belgium. Who knows what fun they'll really be having?

GO AHEAD, NEWT, MAKE OUR DAY: House Speaker Newt Gingrich's position on gays in the military is—you guessed it—a model of cynicism. We know this from first-hand experience. At an on-the-record lunch at TNR three years ago, we asked him his view of the matter. In a burst of candor, he told us he thought people's private lives should have nothing to do with their qualifications for their jobs. When the issue exploded under Bill Clinton, Gingrich changed his mind and backed the ban. Last week, he went one step further, threatening to reverse Clinton's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy in the Congress and restore the status quo ante. (He subsequently soft-pedaled this position.) All of which shows that sometimes he may be too cynical for his own good. The truth is, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is indistinguishable from the old policy in terms of its effect on gay servicemembers (see "Lift the Ban," TNR, March 27). But it cloaks the unfairness in a patina of apparent compromise. Perhaps it would be better to return to the honest bigotry of the old ban: it would clarify the terms of the civil rights struggle of the 1990s. To make matters even clearer, the White House could pre-empt Gingrich, take a noble stand and lift the ban by executive order. Yeah, right.

POL TAX: Anyone who still believes Newt Gingrich is serious about balancing the budget by 2002 has some

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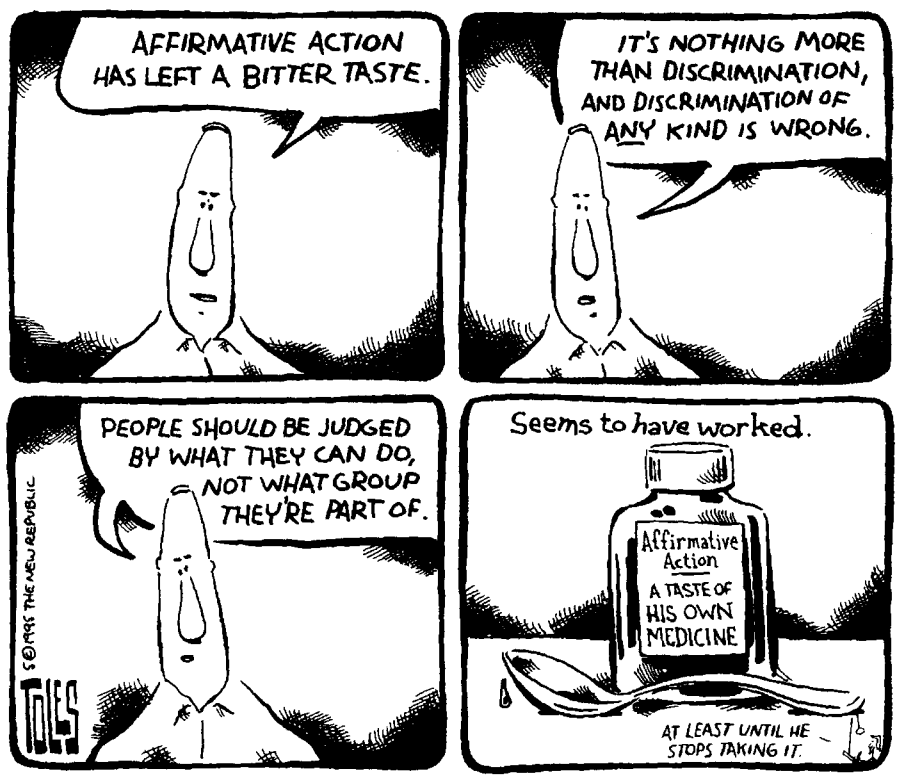
explaining to do. His maneuvering over the tax bill makes it obvious he's not just indifferent to the deficit, he's hostile to anyone who isn't. Gingrich spent the week beating down the demands of colleagues who feared the $189 billion package of tax cuts would only dig the country in deeper. When a group of House Republicans warned him last week that they would vote against the bill unless it was linked to specific budget cuts, it looked for a moment like Gingrich would be forced to show how he intended to make up for the lost cash. There were nearly thirty dissenters, more than enough to derail the bill if they stuck together. They didn't. After a dressing down from Newt, the group settled for a flaccid promise to try to meet deficit reduction targets. Gingrich was equally dismissive of Republicans who opposed the $500-per-child credit for couples earning up to $200,000 instead of $95,000. Led by Republican Pat Roberts of Kansas, they pleaded that the credit was too expensive and looked like just another Republican giveaway to the rich. Gingrich responded by pulling out the big guns: he threatened to keep Congress in session over Easter unless they gave in. Opposition? Who said anything about opposition?


AFFIRMATIVE ACTION HAS LEFT A BITTER TASTE.
IT'S NOTHING MORE THAN DISCRIMINATION, AND DISCRIMINATION OF ANY KIND IS WRONG.
PEOPLE SHOULD BE JUDGED BY WHAT THEY CAN DO, NOT WHAT GROUP THEY'RE PART OF.
TOLES
©1995 THE NEW REPUBLIC
Seems to have worked.
Affirmative Action
A TASTE OF HIS OWN MEDICINE
AT LEAST UNTIL HE STOPS TAKING IT.

MAKE IT AN A-, THEN: "Out of 59,000 students who have graduated from a variety of programs, less than 300 have been cited for human rights violations like torture and murder, and less than fifty have been convicted of anything."—Major Gordon Martel, spokesman for the U.S. Army's School for the Americas, answering charges that the school is actually a training academy for assassins.

TIME BOMB: It was a replay of a familiar scene. This time the Reuters photograph was from Gaza where 10,000 locals assembled to proclaim they would wreak vengeance on Israel for having killed Kamal Kheil, a long-wanted leader of the murderous Qassam Brigade of the not-much-less-murderous Hamas movement. Unfortunately, Kheil and five of his comrades were killed not by the Israelis, but by their own incompetence in constructing bombs. Some thirty other Palestinians were also wounded in the blast. But such an event was not likely to spur a moment of contrition or doubt. For it was of course Israel—by some versions, in cahoots with Arafat's PLO—that was actually behind the blast. Or so the Palestinian street had it. One of the typical expressions of the Palestinian fratricide is to label an enemy as a lackey of the hated Jews. Of course, virtually none is such a lackey; what each is trying to do is to win the Palestinian population from the other. In this divisive world, there is only one matter of consensus: to make as much trouble for Israel as possible. The rest is a competition for extremism. In a remarkably obtuse article in *The Washington Post*, Stephen Rosenfeld argued that "alas, there are currently no live Arab specimens" of polities which are inclusive of such extremists. He counsels Israel and the PLO to "co-opt them" into democratic coalition politics. We wonder what world Rosenfeld is living in. It certainly isn't the Middle East.

RONALD REAGAN RETURNS: "[President Clinton now has] a newfangled, four-color 'message calendar' that his aides have produced to remind him what he—and they—should be talking about. Almost every working day in the life of the president wears a little colored bar to denote a theme: purple for foreign policy, orange for the economy, blue for social policy and green for government reform. 'A lot of purple in there,' a Clinton aide said, gazing ruefully at the dominant color of a just-concluded March. 'He wants to see more green.'"—Doyle McManus's story (in black and white) in *The Los Angeles Times*, April 3.

GREAT NEWS FOR US ALL:

Tomatoes come in big, little, medium sizes

—*The Daily Progress*, Charlottesville, Virginia, March 30. (Thanks to Don Reynolds of Ivy, Virginia.) •

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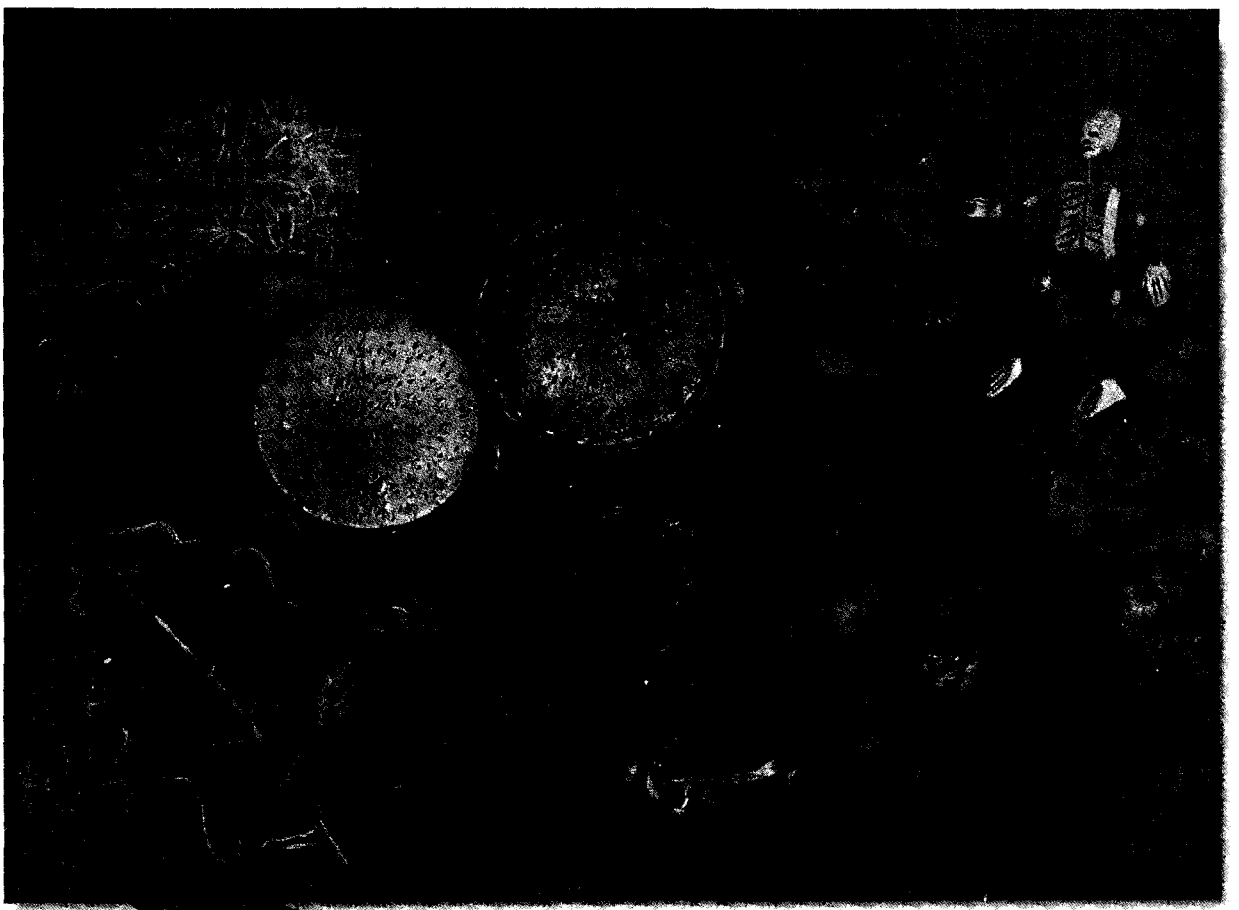
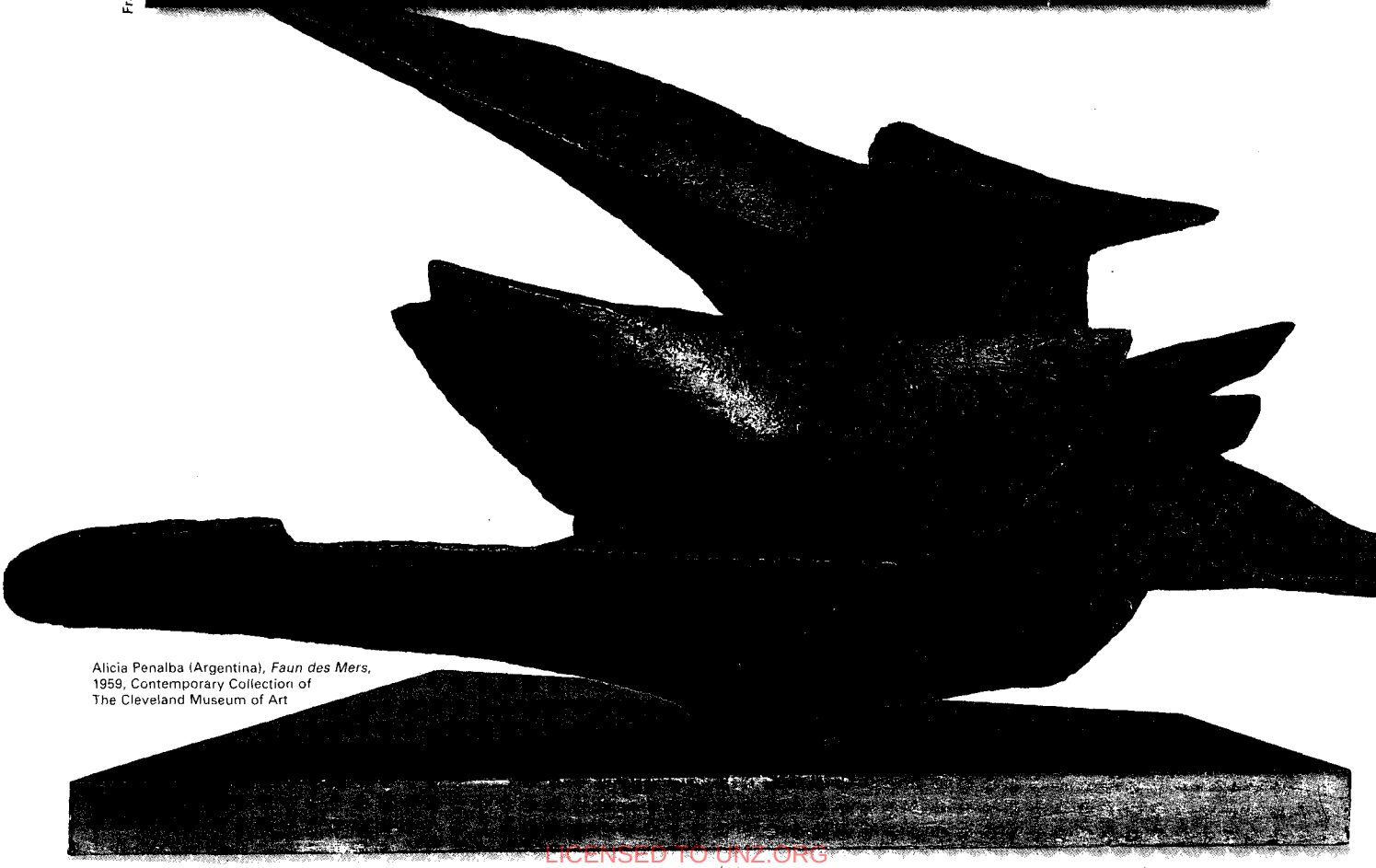


Frida Kahlo (Mexico), *Naturaleza muerta: pitahayas*, 1938, Madison Art Center, Wisconsin, Bequest of Rudolph and Louise Langer



Alicia Penalba (Argentina), *Faun des Mers*, 1959, Contemporary Collection of The Cleveland Museum of Art

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They speak the same language.
Yet each has something very different to say.

Mari Mater O'Neill (Puerto Rico), *Paisaje en Fuego #2 Autorretrato*, 1992, Collection Mr. and Mrs. Pedro Muñoz Marin, San Juan, Puerto Rico

Latin American Women Artists, 1915-1995

The range of expression you see here emerged from a world of influences. Some modern, some ancient. Some Spanish or Portuguese, others African or Asian. You're invited to the first large scale exhibition of 20th-century Latin American women's art ever presented in the U.S. These 35 artists from 11 countries find expression through a variety of media—from painting and sculpture, to fiber, works on paper, even multimedia installations. This celebration of shared heritage, this homage to ancestral richness, will give you an enlightening insight into the forces that have shaped artistic development in this century. Each artist has much to say. Come listen. For more information, call (414) 224-3240.

Milwaukee Art Museum March 3-May 28, 1995
Phoenix Art Museum July 7-October 1, 1995
The Denver Art Museum/Museo de las Americas October 28, 1995-January 14, 1996
The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC February 8-April 29, 1996

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HOLLYWOOD POSTCARD

SSHCHIR?

By Douglas G. McGrath

If you're not a stickler for geography, Hollywood and Washington could be sister cities. Both are one-industry towns where people preach fiscal restraint while throwing money around like pig feed. Both are led by people who shun association with the unpopular projects they pushed while clutching credit for the popular ones they didn't. Neither can claim an intellectual advantage. While it's true that a development executive at Disney once asked if the characters in *The Joy Luck Club had* to be Oriental, that is no more stunning than Speaker Gingrich's suggestion that high school be shortened because it is just subsidized dating.

The single area in which Washington may claim a measure of dignity over Hollywood is that at the end of each year, it does not give itself an awards ceremony like the Oscars. In fact, the only country that has a ceremony comparable to the Oscars is one in South America where a witch doctor comes on TV and, by staring at the camera in a certain way for three minutes, puts the entire country to sleep. (At the Oscars this year, Arthur Hiller beat the doctor's time by two minutes and forty-five seconds.) There is no ceremony to honor entertainment that is less entertaining than the Oscars, no ceremony more dreaded for its vulgarity or, worse, its "dignity," no ceremony more criticized for the lunacy of its nominations and no ceremony I was more eager to attend when I found out that I was among the people whom the lunatics had nominated.

Woody Allen and I shared a nomination for our screenplay of *Bullets Over Broadway*. Woody does not attend these events, possibly because the only thing worse than watching three and a half hours of the Oscars on television is watching three and a half hours of the Oscars in Los Angeles and then waiting two hours for your car. And, at first, I myself was not going to go. I have always thought that people look grubby running up those steps after a prize. Then I looked around my apartment and felt it would be hard to beat this for grubbiness.

Though I am making a strenuous effort to sound above it all, my fiancée, Jane, and I were in a delirium of excitement from the minute we arrived and found a two-foot chocolate Oscar waiting for us in the room.

The awards are at 6:00. The ceremony is not that far away but you have to allow for the other limos. In a town where limos outnumber buses 20 to 1, this requires a generous allowance. So, at 3:30, Jane and I went to the lobby and found ourselves in a stream of stars going out the revolving door. Roped off outside the door waits a berserk group of fans and press who jerk to attention as soon as the door starts to turn. They fling out their autograph pads, lift their still cameras, hoist their video cameras and flood the area with light. As soon as the star is identified, there is a riot of flashbulbs and every last person yells the star's name, hoping to lure him to his or her pad. One way to do this is to make one's voice as distinct as possible, and in these circumstances that did not mean making the voice more melodious. I watched one man try to attract Uma Thurman by altering his voice in such a way that I actually could not take my eyes off him. He sounded like a donkey who had learned English.

As Morgan Freeman went through the door ahead of us, igniting a bonfire of lights, for the first time we became nervous and self-conscious. I looked at Jane anxiously and, tenderly, she gave me a kiss. I straightened my tie and we went through the door. I don't think so many lights have been turned off at once since the New York blackout in 1965. So sudden was the loss of light that I lost my balance and stepped on Jane's foot. Everything came down—cameras, pads—and the sense of disgust with us for being only people was palpable. Jane looked as though she were going to apologize.

But then a woman spoke. "Sshchir?" she said, meaning "Sir?" Her sibilants sounded like that thing the dentist puts in your mouth to suck out the saliva. I turned and saw a small woman in a baseball cap with gray bangs over her eyes—old but girlish. "Are you Douglasssh McGrathsh?" She asked if I would give her my autograph and offered me an index card. My spirits rallied and I took the pen, admiring her immediately. She peered up shyly through her bangs as I signed. When I handed her the card, she broke into a big smile. It has been said that a smile tells a lot about a person. It told me a lot about her. It told me she was completely toothless. You could have placed an orange on her bottom lip and rolled it straight through to her tonsils. I do not mention this as a criticism since she was the only person to ask me for my autograph. When I tell this story in the future, I will merely say that the smile gave her face a lovely open quality.

Our limo came and it was every bit as preposterous as I had hoped: so long that the driver's phone had a different area code than ours. The driver's name was Burch and just so we wouldn't forget it, he gave us a helpful trick: "It's easy. Just think *Burch.*" The ten-mile trip took two hours.

At the Oscars ceremony they have a group of people in formal wear waiting in herds throughout the auditorium to take your seat if for any reason you should leave. Some people go to the bathroom or, as the show enters the third hour, order Chinese food or medical aid. When you first see a professional sitter you think, "Only in Hollywood would people get paid just to sit while other people do the work." Then you remember Hollywood's sister city. But in Washington they're not called professional sitters. They're called congressional Democrats. •

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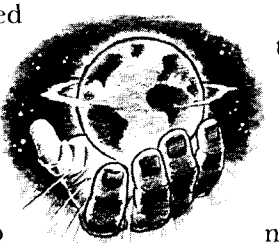
NATIONAL INSECURITY

GET SMARTER

By Charles Lane

A few years ago, a senior member of Guatemala's Congress was invited to lecture at an institution he had never heard of before: his country's School of Intelligence. Driven to a tightly guarded compound near La Aurora Military Base in Guatemala City, he watched slack-jawed as gates swung open to reveal fountains, trimmed lawns and a glass-and-concrete building. Inside, in an air-conditioned auditorium, sixty members of the Guatemalan Army's notorious intelligence unit, G-2, peppered him with hostile questions. "Why is Congress so inefficient?" they demanded. Picturing Congress's own decrepit offices in the smog-choked city center, the legislator suggested gently that civilian government might function better if it had better facilities.

The plush School of Intelligence, designed and built by the CIA in the late 1980s, stands as a monument to the contradictions of U.S. cold war-era policy toward Central America. We condemned human rights abuses and supported democracy, even as we lavished goodies on the armies responsible for political murders and coup attempts as incentives to humanize. But only grudgingly did the United States ever cut support when these armies failed to keep their part of the bargain. The CIA was especially willing to excuse misfeasance for the sake of the war against Communism and the protection of its intelligence "assets." Central Americans weren't fooled. "The National Endowment for Democracy gave us a few computers and that was it," the former Guatemalan congressman told me. "But you could see that the support of the U.S. government was more active to the Army."



Now there's a scandal over the CIA's sponsorship of Col. Julio Alberto Alpírez, a member of both G-2 and the notorious "Kaibil" special forces who allegedly covered up both American innkeeper Michael DeVine's murder in 1990 and the 1992 torture-murder of a Guatemalan guerrilla married to American lawyer Jennifer Harbury. The CIA is charged with withholding information about the murders from the State Department and, possibly, from President Clinton. Clinton, who rescinded a Reagan-Bush-era covert action "finding" that authorized the CIA to help fight the scattered remnants of a Marxist rebel army in Guatemala, pledges an investigation.

The flap illustrates Michael Kinsley's Law of Scandal: the problem isn't what was illegal, it's what was legal. Guatemala's was hardly the only brutal and corrupt army in Central America to benefit from U.S. largesse, covert and overt. Support for the Honduran and Salvadoran militaries was far greater. And the CIA was hardly the only U.S. agency eager for access to, and influence over, Guatemala's G-2 after the Carter-era ban on aid to Guatemala was lifted in 1985. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) had a close relationship with both the Guatemalan Treasury Police and G-2—though key officers and civilian officials themselves were deeply involved in narcotics. (The Clinton administration has said that DEA and CIA anti-drug programs will be exempted from its decision to cut CIA aid.) Before overt help was ended in December 1990 to protest DeVine's killing, the Pentagon, too, delivered $30 million of equipment and training. Green Berets trained at the Kaibil base near where DeVine's body was found.

Nor was the reinstatement of military aid to Guatemala an exclusively Republican policy. Throughout the '80s, the Guatemalan Army tried repeatedly to end its pariah status in Washington. It handed the presidency to an elected civilian, Vinicio Cerezo, in 1985, and helped Oliver North channel weapons to the Nicaraguan contras. But Congress refused to grant more than modest, nonlethal aid. Only when Guatemala reverted to opposition to the contras in 1987 did Democrats agree to consider more military aid. In fiscal year 1989, Congress voted $9 million—$4 million *more* than Reagan had requested.

Until the end of the cold war converged with the DeVine murder, there was bipartisan support on Capitol Hill for rewarding Guatemala's Army. The persistent and gutsy Jennifer Harbury has now probably shattered this consensus for good. We will have her to thank if the current scandal results in much-needed days of reckoning for the CIA and its Guatemalan protégés. Yet her romance with a Guatemalan *comandante*, portrayed by *The New York Times* as a chaste *pas de deux*, is a case study in another cold war-era American illusion about Central America: the romanticization of the left. U.S. policy was often wrong, and the murder of Harbury's husband, Efraín Bámaca, was a war crime. But DeVine, not Bámaca, was one of that war's *innocent* victims. The perfidy of some of America's allies does not prove the virtue of America's enemies.

America's cold war struggle has been morally vindicated by the exposure of the true nature and ambitions of the Soviet empire. Yet we won, it must be admitted, partly by making common cause with foreign rulers who themselves were killers and criminals. The price of victory over Communism is to be measured partly in the deaths the United States tolerated. The investigation of CIA activity in Guatemala should focus on what the agency and other agencies knew and when they knew it. But given that America's new wars against drug traffic and terrorism may oblige us to make new unsavory alliances, both critics and supporters of past American policy should treat this as an opportunity to reflect, with appropriate humility, on the moral balance of the Central American chapter of the cold war. •

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The real reason Yeltsin invaded.

THE CHECHEN MAFIA

By Andrew Meier

Oil, of course, played a big part. So did the fear that an unchecked cycle of secession would tear the Russian Federation apart. But Boris Yeltsin was not lying last December when he denounced Chechnya as "one of the most sinister centers not only of Russian but also of world crime." He just failed to marshal his facts.

Russia's chief executive could have made a stronger case for intervention if he had followed George Bush's Panama script. After all, Manuel Noriega compares favorably with Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, and Chechnya's strategic position resembles Panama's—a porous gateway for a contraband trade in narcotics and weapons. Throw in a rogue regime bent on exploiting the region's resources at the expense of an aggrieved populace (including tens of thousands of ethnic Russians), and Yeltsin had all he needed to justify some kind of intervention.

At first, the U.S. State Department seconded Yeltsin's condemnation of Chechnya as a "hotbed of crime." But thanks to the grotesqueries of the Russian onslaught—including the indiscriminate bombing of civilians and attacks on fleeing refugees—an entirely understandable backlash developed. The West confessed to premature Chechen-bashing and retreated from earlier accusations. In the hands of the combatants' propagandists, the war looked like a face-off between Russian imperialists and Chechen thugs. Lost in the burlesque of charge and counter-charge was the real threat that organized crime on the Chechen scale can pose to the development of stable democratic institutions and free markets. Yet a closer look at the evidence suggests that the Russians were right about the extent of criminal control in Chechnya.

First, unlike the liberation movements in the Baltics, Ukraine or Tajikistan, post-Soviet Chechnya did not produce a grass-roots drive for independence. Dudayev's insurgency was venal first and nationalist after the fact. Only when confronted with Russian bombardments did the mass of Chechens pledge their lives to Dudayev's defense.

Dudayev's true base of support is in Chechnya's *teips*, clans that, in the upheaval of the post-Soviet era, controlled all paths to power and wealth in the republic. The new Chechen state was built around these established *teips*, the most prominent of which form the core of the Chechen crime syndicates.

Shortly after the attempted Kremlin coup of August 1991, Dudayev, then a major general in the Soviet air force, won the support of the most powerful *teips*. Having retired to Grozny from his posting in Estonia, he pulled off a coup, storming government offices with an armed band. On October 27, he declared himself president, and in November he was elected in a vote widely condemned as fraudulent.

Ironically, the remaining Red Army troops hastily decamped, leaving Chechnya awash in arms in 1991. Then, in May 1992, according to Russian press reports, Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev signed over half of the army's depots to Dudayev. It should have come as no surprise, then, that Dudayev's fighters now have in their arsenals Soviet-made T-72 tanks, armored personnel carriers, anti-aircraft guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

With Chechnya his personal duchy, the dapper Dudayev abandoned his Red Army uniform in favor of a black fedora and swank pinstripes. He also made use of the post-Soviet chaos to link up Chechen criminals across the former Soviet Union and Europe. Foreign correspondent Stephen Handelman, in his exhaustive study of post-Soviet crime, *Comrade Criminal*, forthcoming from Yale University Press, went so far as to call Chechnya "the former Soviet Union's first mafia-controlled state."

As it happens, Russia's blockade of Chechnya actually fed Dudayev's coffers. During the days of Soviet control, only 2 percent of Chechen oil revenues remained in the region. From 1992 to 1994, this revenue stayed in Chechnya. Yet during Dudayev's tenure not one new school, hospital or factory was built. Industrial production fell by more than 70 percent, largely as a result of underinvestment. Where did all the money go? Having witnessed the Chechens' weapons reserves, the answer is obvious. But, according to U.S. and European law enforcement officials, much of their hard currency remains cached away in European and Middle Eastern banks.

By 1994 Chechen criminal organizations had built up the most lucrative and far-reaching network of contraband goods in the former Soviet Union. Their smugglers' manifest now runs from weapons to cars to counterfeit money to prostitutes. Narcotics—opium and hashish from neighboring Central Asia—rank at the top.

But weapons follow not far behind. In a little-known 1993 episode, two Chechen brothers were assassinated in London. Details about the pair—Ruslan and Nazarbek Utsiyev—were slow to emerge. Although both were traveling on tourist visas and Soviet passports, in 1992 they had paid 1 million pounds, cash, for a four-bedroom penthouse on Baker Street. They built a jacuzzi and sauna and invited a variety of foreign female visitors to all-night soirées.

Ruslan Utsiyev, it turned out, was no ordinary gangster. He was Dudayev's adviser for foreign economic affairs. Stories differed about what he and his brother were doing in London. But law enforcement officials in London say the brothers came to buy 2,000 stinger mis-

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siles, which they planned to resell to the Azeri side in their fight with Armenia for the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Two Armenians were convicted of the murders. Before hanging himself, one of these Armenians (an ex-KGB major) gave a statement outlining the Chechen arms deal. Says Police Detective Superintendent Kenneth Woodward, who investigated the case in London: "Although we found no evidence tying Ruslan to any criminal acts, there were large amounts of money coming to him through various banks from the Chechen government." Their arms deal may have gone awry, but according to Scotland Yard, there is strong evidence of "considerable Chechen illicit business throughout London and southern England."

The Chechen syndicates have also proved adept at various forms of financial crime, including bank fraud and counterfeiting. In 1992, for example, the agents of the Russian Federal Counterintelligence Agency ("FSK," or the rechristened KGB) intercepted a dozen Chechens as they attempted the biggest bank fraud in Russian history: a swindle of 60 billion rubles—then worth nearly $700 million—from private banks in Moscow and other cities, using promissory notes, a form of interbank transfer inherited from the Soviet era.

Scotland Yard and Interpol believe that the two Chechens executed in London in 1993 were also involved in attempts to use the British Royal Mint to acquire the latest in currency and documentation printing technology. Dudayev, in his official statement on the murders, even claimed that the two were on an official mission "to design new passports, money and postal stamps" for the newly liberated Chechnya.

Finally, the Chechen syndicates have been involved in terrorist activities that clearly demonstrate their threat to Russian stability. In recent years, Chechen gangs have routinely raided Russian cargo containers crossing their republic on the vital rail artery that links Russia and Azerbaijan. They made attempts at hostage-taking and hijacking in October 1991, March 1992, December 1993 and four times last year (in May, June, July and October) at airports in Rostov-on-Don and Mineralnyye Vody within Russia and Makhachkala in Dagestan.

The Chechens are not, of course, the only mobsters to emerge from the post-communist flotsam. Organized crime wields some influence in nearly all of the newly independent states. In Moscow, assassinations and car bombs have become a part of everyday life, and nearly 220,000 crimes are reported each month. But it is a testament to the stature of the Chechen wiseguys—and an ironic by-product of the Chechen war—that their Russian counterparts have welcomed the carnage in Grozny as a convenient means of eliminating the competition. "No one wants to see our boys dying down there," one Russian gangster told me in January. "But it wasn't for nothing. Chechnya wasn't our second Afghanistan. This war had victors: us."

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A history and a primer.

IRAN'S NUCLEAR MENACE

By Kenneth R. Timmerman

Iran's nuclear deal with Russia and its opposition to the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons make it clear that the Iranians are deadly serious about developing a nuclear weapons capacity, and that Russia is not likely to stop them. The nuclear deal, signed officially on January 7 in Tehran, was confirmed this week, against considerable American pressure. The deal is initially worth $800 million to Russia and involves the rebuilding of an abandoned power reactor that was initially constructed by a German company in the late 1970s. The deal could eventually net as much as $8 billion if Iran asks the Russians to construct an additional three power plants near the southwestern city of Büshehr, as well as a research reactor and other unidentified nuclear facilities.

The military threat springs in part from the nature of the reactors. As Republican Senator John McCain of Arizona, a nonproliferation advocate, has pointed out, "The light water reactor going to Iran has the potential to produce enough plutonium to build thirty-five bombs per year." To obtain the plutonium, Iran must be able to reprocess spent reactor fuel in some way that escapes the attention of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, which is supposed to monitor civilian nuclear exchanges.

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Russia has not stated whether it has reached an agreement with Iran over the spent reactor fuel from Büshehr. But Alexei Yablokov, chairman of the Russian government's Commission for Ecological Security, told the Reuters news service on February 15 that "thanks to Russia, Iran will be in a position to get the nuclear bomb within a few years.... If we eventually build this nuclear plant, we'll commit ourselves to recycle nuclear fuel and return plutonium to Iran. Experience proves that one can develop a nuclear weapon out of energy-producing plutonium."

The United States is urging Russia to take the spent fuel back to Russia for reprocessing, without returning the plutonium obtained from it to Iran. So far, however, Russia has thumbed its nose at these requests. Russian-Iranian relations have been solidifying ever since Iranian President Ali Abkar Hashemi-Rafsanjani visited Russia in 1989 and signed the first of several multi-billion-dollar arms and technology transfer agreements with the Russian military. To cement these ties, Boris Yeltsin will visit Iran sometime this spring.

If Iran were energy-poor and in desperate need of nuclear power, one might be able to understand Iran's quest for nuclear power. But Iran is sitting on top of the third-largest oil and gas reserves in the world. (Saudi Arabia and Iraq are ahead of it.) If Iran really were short on energy, it could build gas-fired power plants at much lower cost, or make better use of its vast hydraulic resources. The truth is, it simply has no need for peaceful nuclear power. Besides, Tehran has become so cash-strapped it cannot afford such a massive investment. Despite its natural wealth, Iran has been unable to finance much-needed investments to maintain basic oil industry infrastructure, the primary source of hard currency.

So what exactly are the mullahs up to? It helps to understand that Iran's nuclear interests haven't sprung up overnight. In fact, Iran's history of nukes probably began a quarter-century ago. In the late 1960s or early 1970s, Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlavi was believed to have launched a clandestine program to explore the possibility of obtaining nuclear weapons. The shah purchased a research reactor from the United States and sent hundreds of young scientists to the United States and France for training in nuclear physics and engineering. In 1976 Iran's Atomic Energy Agency signed a multi-billion-dollar deal with the nuclear power subsidiary of Siemens of Germany to build a power station at Büshehr—the one the Russians are now helping to rebuild. The shah also signed a similar deal with the French government to build two nuclear power plants in Ahwaz and purchased a 10 percent stake in the Eurodif reprocessing conglomerate that links France, Belgium, Spain and Italy. Lastly, he loaned $1 billion in cash to the French Atomic Energy Commission to build a uranium enrichment plant at Tricastin in the south of France. Under this 1974 agreement, Iran was to have "full access" to Eurodif enrichment technology and pledged to purchase a certain quota of the uranium produced at the Tricastin plant.

All four of these deals were canceled almost immediately after the Islamic revolution in 1979, because Ayatollah Khomeini then opposed scientific and technical cooperation with the West. But the war with Iraq, which began in September 1980, and Israel's bombing of Iraq's French-built nuclear weapons plant in Osirak in 1981 prompted Iran's leaders to reconsider their position. In 1986 Hashemi-Rafsanjani, then speaker of the Iranian parliament, launched a yearly nuclear power seminar aimed at luring exiled Iranian nuclear scientists back to the Islamic republic. That year Iran also began working closely with Pakistan. Dr. Abel Qader Khan, the father of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, visited Iran as a consultant, and the two countries signed a secret agreement under which Iranian nuclear physicists would be trained at Pakistani nuclear institutes. By 1992 suspicion that Iran was intending to build nuclear weapons had reached a fever pitch.

Iran has denied in recent months that it has any intention to develop a nuclear weapons capability. But over the past ten years it has repeatedly tried to procure nuclear weapons material from Europe, China and the former Soviet states. In 1985 Iran purchased a "subcritical" experimental reactor from China, without declaring the purchase to the International Atomic Energy Agency. In July 1987 Iran purchased from China equipment that is used for enriching uranium. On January 21, 1990, Chinese and Iranian officials signed an agreement to build a twenty-seven-megawatt plutonium production reactor in Isfahan. U.S. satellite photographs taken in September 1991 documented major construction work at the site and the presence of large numbers of Chinese technicians. In 1991 Iran also attempted to purchase a research reactor from India and a nuclear fuel fabrication plant from Argentina, although both sales were blocked after high-level intervention from Washington with their respective governments.

After this interference from the United States, Iran turned to the black market. Later in 1991, it reportedly purchased uranium-melting technology from Pakistan. It sent dozens of buying teams to nuclear facilities in Kazakhstan and elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, with orders to purchase nuclear material that was no longer controlled by Moscow. The prevalence of these Iranian buying teams and the lack of security surrounding the former Soviet nuclear production sites prompted the United States, in late 1994, to evacuate to the United States 600 kilograms of nuclear weapons material from a Kazakh civilian nuclear site—a site never previously thought to be associated with nuclear weapons production. Further, Iran has also purchased nuclear dual-use equipment from companies in Belgium, Germany and Italy, which could be used for a military uranium-enrichment program. These purchases have only heightened suspicions of Iran's nuclear intentions.

In contrast to the denials heard these days, it was not

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uncommon several years ago for Iranian leaders to speak openly about their nuclear aims. In a 1987 address to Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, then-President Ali Khamene'i stated: "Regarding atomic energy, we need it now.... Our nation has always been threatened from outside. The least we can do to face this danger is to let our enemies know that we can defend ourselves." A year later, Hashemi-Rafsanjani, who was then president of Iran's parliament and also commander in chief of the military, told an audience of Revolutionary Guards Corps officers that the Iran-Iraq war showed that "We should fully equip ourselves both in the offensive and defensive use of chemical, bacteriological and radiological weapons." Again, in October 1991, one of Iran's three deputy presidents, Ataollah Mohajerani, told the *Abrar*, a daily newspaper, that Muslim states "should strive to go ahead" and develop nuclear weapons. "I am not talking only about one Muslim country, but rather all the Muslim states," he said. "If Israel should be allowed to have nuclear power then Muslim states, too, should be allowed to have same."

As a signatory of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, Iran is subject to regular inspections by international officials of its declared nuclear facilities, to ensure that civilian nuclear technology is not diverted to weapons use. These inspections, however, are of dubious value. In 1992 the International Atomic Energy Agency sent a team of experts to Tehran to investigate rumors of clandestine facilities. According to the agency's findings, one suspicious location they sought to visit—an alleged uranium-enrichment site in the mountains outside Qazvin—was found to be nothing more than a "recreation center" used by the Atomic Energy Organization. Other questionable sites were deemed equally innocuous. As team leader Jon Jennekins announced at a now-infamous press conference on February 12, 1992, in Tehran, the agency had concluded "there doesn't seem to be a shred of evidence of any of these misleading misrepresentations.... Everything that we have seen is for the peaceful application of nuclear energy and ionizing radiation." As it turns out, these findings may not have been accurate. According to both U.S. intelligence officials and some members of Jennekins's own inspection team, two of the six sites the inspectors visited were in fact decoy sites, far from the nuclear centers of concern.

Whatever the accuracy of that particular inspection, the agency's experiences during inspections in Iraq and North Korea have reinforced the notion that the agency can only effectively investigate a clandestine nuclear weapons program if it receives the total support of the U.N. Security Council, including detailed intelligence from the permanent five members. Otherwise, it is at the mercy of its own member-states, which include countries such as Iraq, Libya, Syria and North Korea.

While most intelligence analysts believe Iran's nuclear weapons program is still in its early stages, they remain cautious when it comes to establishing how far Iran may be from the bomb. Help from Russia in any of at least three ways—technology transfer, stolen nuclear material, even disaffected Russian scientists hired by Tehran—could significantly accelerate the Iranian program. Iran appears to be making a concerted effort in all three directions.

"Our real concern is aid that helps Iran to develop a nuclear infrastructure in the guise of a civilian program," said one senior intelligence officer who tracks the Iranian program. This is precisely why the Russian nuclear deal with Tehran worries Washington. "The broader Iran's nuclear technology base," the official said, "the better chance the Iranians have of growing that key individual to a successful program: the nuclear weapons designer." Iran is currently believed to have a cadre of some 2,000 nuclear experts, of whom only 220 are trained scientists.

What's a superpower to do? Given the acute difficulty of enforcing nonproliferation, one option is a total trade ban, as proposed by Republican Senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York. Though it's a blunt weapon, it's probably the best option now available short of war. Indeed, some in the administration are suggesting that the White House issue an executive order halting U.S. sales to Tehran in order to pre-empt legislation and retain the policy initiative. A trade ban would weaken the Iranian regime by eroding confidence in the ability of Tehran's leaders to manage Iran's ailing economy. It would increase the Clinton administration's clout when urging U.S. allies to curtail sales to Iran. And if Iran is going to pay for Russian reactors (and other nuclear goodies), it will need to maintain or expand its oil sales. While not directly affecting Iran's ability to sell its oil on the world market, the trade ban would accentuate Iran's pariah status and deter companies and countries already hesitant over their dealings with Iran from expanding them.

This is a risky strategy, however. Iran has threatened to use Washington's efforts to block its nuclear ambitions as a pretext for sabotaging the nonproliferation treaty review conference this month. And it is attempting to cobble together a coalition of Third World nations disgruntled over Israel's refusal to join the nonproliferation treaty and by what it calls the West's "selective" use of nonproliferation. The U.S. ambassador to the conference, Thomas Graham of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, is making an all-out effort to foil the Iranian effort.

Tehran is seriously worried by what it calls Washington's use of "selective proliferation." In Geneva last September, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velyati called the nonproliferation treaty an "outdated treaty." Iran has apparently hinted to Russia that it might opt out of the treaty if the United States maintains its opposition to the Büshehr reactor deals, hoping to get the kind of trade and aid in exchange that the Clinton administration offered to North Korea. The coddling of Kim Il Sung and his successors may yet come back to haunt the United States. •

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The GOP bid to close the gender gap.

INVASION OF THE CHURCH LADIES

By Hanna Rosin

"We have gathered here today," begins Frances Fox-Piven, "because the rights of poor women are under *massive* attack." It is a cold March morning on the Capitol steps, and the aging activist has roused the weary vanguard of American feminism to take on Newt Gingrich. Flanked by sisters-in-arms Betty Friedan, Bella Abzug and Pat Schroeder, she unleashes an impassioned defense of welfare mothers. "Those Republicans are happy to add to the ranks of beggars in the city, to cut off the rent money, cut off the grocery money," Fox-Piven yells hoarsely to a crowd of admiring nose-ringed teens. Pointing a wrinkled finger at the dome, she jeers, "There are a lot of very excited men in that building."

Not quite right. Inside, Newt and his henchmen are nowhere to be found at the packed Republican press conference on welfare reform. Instead, it is the GOP congress*women*, their ranks swollen by the last election, who are in charge. And are they excited. "Here you see us," crows Representative Deborah Pryce as she wheels out the party's newest female talent. "Do we look like ogres?" Except for reporters, there are no gray slacks in sight. The house matrons crowd around the microphone, a disarmingly bright troop clad in red, pink and blue suits.

TV cameras zoom in, for this is the first time some of the freshwomen have appeared as a group. First comes Enid Waldholtz of Utah, only the second woman ever to serve while pregnant. Next is Andrea Seastrand of California, who touts her credentials as a former grade-school teacher. Helen Chenoweth of Idaho talks of having been a poor single mother. Even Linda Smith of Washington, known for her harsh rhetoric, coos: "They always make me sound much tougher than I am."

The recent expansion of the party's feminine side is no accident. In 1993 a poll by a newly formed PAC, the Republican Network to Elect Women, found that female Republicans held far greater appeal for independents and wavering Democrats than men did. Gingrich was "fascinated," says Karen Roberts, executive director of the organization. He assembled the twelve Republican women already in the House into a "buddy system" and dispatched them to vulnerable electoral districts. The Republican National Committee beamed satellite advice to the candidates and their husbands. The results, says Roberts, were "better than my best guess": seven new women in the House, one in the Senate, and almost 100 in state legislatures; in short, almost a 70 percent increase in the ranks of Republican women.

Of course, elected Republican women are still a small minority. But in the House, at least, their visibility is out of proportion to their numbers. In the past, the most any woman could hope for was a humble subcommittee chair. Gingrich put the Democrats' record to shame by elevating two women to leadership positions, one to a committee chair and several, including Waldholtz, to the Rules Committee. Since last year, GOP women have crowded into Gingrich's office every other Tuesday for a private meeting, one of few he holds outside leadership meetings.

The exposure is calculated. When Republican leaders are tarred with stealing food from needy schoolchildren or trampling on welfare mothers, they can call on one of their House mothers to defend them. "Women candidates appeal more to women voters and minorities than men," explains Haley Barbour, chairman of the RNC. "Look at the welfare debate. Women can make it plain that we're reforming welfare not because we don't care but precisely because we do." Adds John Boehner, chairman of the Republican Conference: "We know from our research that women help us expand to the broadest possible base of Americans. They present a much softer message than your typical white male over forty."

There's just one problem with this strategy. If the goal is to woo voters scared off by the party's right flank, the new female faces are the wrong bait. The old class of Republican women, such as Connie Morella, Nancy Johnson and Susan Molinari, served as a moderating influence. They made their names in the 1992 Year of the Woman, joining Democratic women to pass legislation like the Family Leave Act, the Violence Against Women Act and bills authorizing federal funding for abortions. The new women break that mold. None ran on a platform of women's issues. Only one, Sue Kelly, has accepted invitations from what's left of the women's caucus. The other six have yet to miss a weekly freshman Bible study.

Of the six pro-lifers, five are from Western states and have banded together as "The Western Women." These self-proclaimed cowgirls are throwbacks to a time when women didn't run for office, a posse of Nancy Reagans unleashed. "Their friends think Republican women aren't supposed to run," explains Barbour. "Only liberal Democratic women run for office." As

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Linda Smith's husband, Vern, sighs: "One of the reasons we got into politics, we wanted to preserve some of the traditional lifestyle we'd grown up with. It's funny, with Linda away, we end up sacrificing some of that traditional family life to pass some of that heritage to our children." Whatever the costs of such conflicts, they can make the women doubly effective. With the credibility of housewives, they can write bills where their patrons—men like Dana Rohrabacher and Bob Dornan—could only throw bombs.

Three of the Western women—Linda Smith of Washington, Helen Chenoweth of Idaho and Andrea Seastrand of California—come particularly well prepared. All have long histories of grass-roots activism in the evangelical and anti-environmental movements: Smith ran her local Eagle Forum chapter, Chenoweth founded Focus on the Family and Seastrand seeded a string of pro-life clinics. Mention their names to Dornan and he can barely control himself. "Oh my God. Those women have the power of someone with a womb. They understand all these abstract words like mother's instinct and nurture. I expect in the next debate they'll lead a whole bunch of unloyal Catholics home. Whoa, I can hardly wait."

Already the three have joined forces to pass an amendment denying abortion funding in cases of rape or incest, despite the leadership's warnings. None has much patience with plaintive calls for accountability to other women. Smith rants about "the League of Women Vipers." Seastrand huffs that "the contract is the only woman's issue." Chenoweth insists on being called congressman.

"You see those two little angels," asks newly elected Linda Smith, jabbing the antenna of her cellular phone toward a picture of her grandkids. Her husband Vern, sitting rigidly in a corner on a hardwood chair, looks up and grins uneasily. "I'm going to show their picture when we debate the budget. I'm having it blown up right now. I'll tell them that they're taking freedom and opportunities away from my little granddaughters. Imagine then if Pat Schroeder gets up and starts whining about killing old people and children. It's a lot different when she's fighting with a grandmother. . . ." A buzz interrupts her. Time for another floor vote. She jams her feet back into her scuffed blue flats and rushes out the side door. "All my life I thought I was a feminist," she yells. "But they've ruined it, they've gone too far."

"Linda Smith couldn't be more vitriolic," says Marjorie Dannenfelser, director of the Susan B. Anthony List, a pro-life PAC that funded Smith's race. Dannenfelser means it as a compliment. "I didn't come here to be a sissy," Smith assents. Her brashness has already earned her a place in history: she is the first newcomer ever to be awarded a subcommittee chair—of taxation and finance. The post suits her. In our interview, Smith spends the first ten minutes talking about her computers. "I inherited an old system from her," she says of the woman she beat, three-term Democrat Jolene Unsoeld. "But I've updated it. I can now scan 390 pieces of mail a day." While other newcomers spruce up their offices with framed posters and flower arrangements, Smith's is adorned only by a single small plaque that reads, "The will of God will never land you where the grace of God can't keep you."

Smith has already managed to provoke her leaders. In her first month in office, she led the freshman rebellion against the balanced budget amendment, insisting on a provision requiring a three-fifths supermajority to pass a tax hike. She was promptly summoned to the speaker's office for a meeting she describes as "testy." Still, she's unrepentant. "We are here on a mission, and I will remain loyal to Gingrich only as long as he doesn't lose sight of what the people of Washington want us to accomplish. . . . My base is more populist than Republican." Smith even snubbed the party's welcome gala for freshmen. "I kept my coat on," she wrote to her local paper, and soon retreated with her Washington staff to a nearby German restaurant.

Of all the testimonials to humble roots, Smith's is the most authentic. Linda Ann Simpson was born in 1950 in La Junta, Colorado, to an ailing mother and an alcoholic father, who disappeared when she was an infant. As a teenager in Vancouver, Washington, she worked odd jobs, she says, such as "clipping toenails for senior citizens." At 16, she met Vern Smith at choir practice at the Glad Tidings Church, and they were married two years later. After high school she turned down a $2,400 annual political science scholarship to go to beauty school. She hated it and dropped out. Finding college "impractical," she enrolled in tax preparation school. Within fifteen years, she was managing seven H&R Block tax offices in Vancouver. "I have a head for business," she explains.

Her first spark of political awareness fueled a distrust of elites. "In the '70s, Vern was involved with the Peace Through Strength crowd, and he would bring lots of people over to the house for debates. Professors in the area, and liberals, and,"—she leans over to whisper—"*Jews*. But it was interesting. I learned a lot." Vern, then a railroad engineer, decided in 1983 to run for state office. The couple met with Clark County GOP Chairman Jim Carpentino, who suggested Linda run instead. That year, she checked out a book from the library about how to campaign and won. She's never lost a race since.

Smith says she was a pro-choice feminist until she was 30. But when the change came, it hit hard. In a statement raked over by countless opponents, Smith warned local churchgoers in 1984: "If you vote for someone who believes in abortion, you have made a conscious decision to participate in sin. . . . To those who say you can't force your narrow beliefs on other people, hogwash, you definitely can force your narrow beliefs on other people." In ten years as a legislator, she lived up to that conviction, sponsoring a bill to end no-fault divorces, one that forced pregnant unwed teens to move in with their parents and another outlawing sex for those under age 18, dubbed the "Heavy Petting Bill" (which she claims

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she never read before signing). Then her ambition outgrew the pulpit. In 1993 she gathered 200,000 signatures for a ballot initiative that required voter approval for a tax increase. It passed, and Linda became a household name in Washington.

Emboldened, Smith took a shot at the House and launched a campaign that combined equal measures of populism and religious fervor. When the Republican front-runner dropped out two weeks before the primary, Smith's supporters urged her to run. But, as she tells it, she and Vern went on vacation that weekend, leaving the decision in "God's hands." In her absence, a group of Glad Tidings volunteers (she refers to them vaguely as "businessmen") got busy. They mailed out 100,000 flyers instructing voters how to write in a candidate and planted Day-Glo pink signs in their front lawns. "It was a miracle," Smith recalls. On primary day, her backers staged a political shoot-out with voting officials. They would repeatedly scrawl her name on master booklets and the officials would repeatedly white it out—until "the white-out was so thick you could feel it," recalls one of Jolene Unsoeld's staffers. In the end, more than 35,000 voters managed to pen in her name, and Smith became the first write-in candidate in state history.

HELEN CHENOWETH, LINDA SMITH AND ANDREA SEASTRAND
BY JOHN SPRINGS FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In the general election, Unsoeld made the fatal mistake of bashing the Contract with America. Smith wisely ignored the attack and instead staged a folksy ad, starring The People: "We put out a call, and thousands came from all over the state. I was walking one way and they started coming in on me." She reenacts the scene, her arms swaying. "It was like, she is with us. We wanted to get politicians out of our pockets so we went to get Linda. Linda. They like me. And I like them. We like each other! And I was trying to touch as many people as I could.... Linda didn't come ask us. We asked her!"

Now in office, Smith's populism has fused with her passion: righting liberal wrongs. On abortion, she is unbending. "I really tried to think if rape and incest makes the child a non-person because their father was a jerk. But we don't kill children because their father is a jerk, and you don't do a horrible thing to justify another horrible thing." Gay rights is not even an issue: "There are genetic inclinations like alcoholism which are destructive, but you don't do it. We don't want to encourage any destructive behavior." Welfare is anathema.

Anyone who believes women naturally make gentler stewards of Mother Earth has yet to meet Helen Chenoweth. Perched in a rose-dotted chair, her petite features and dazzling smile are framed reassuringly by a bouffant at one end and a white silk tie wound around her neck at the other. But as the congresswoman heading the team to rewrite the Endangered Species Act, she is fast becoming known as a James Watt in Ashleyesque frills. "People in Idaho live close to the Earth," she says in her breathy voice. "They love the Earth and take care of it." Rising gracefully, she points to a photograph above her. It shows a patch of land in the Clearwater National Forest in her home state and represents her ideal of a lovingly nurtured habitat. "There is the healthy understory which serves as browse for the game," she says, pointing to a wide treeless patch, "and way in the back is a stand of trees where it's been reforested.... A well-managed forest is good for the health of the community and wildlife, for example, a stability of soil cover prevents erosion in the spring, so as not to deplete the viability of spawning for endangered salmon."

Environmentalists would interpret the photo, which Chenoweth has deployed once before, in a hearing on national parks and forests in February, a little differently. "It's a dying landscape," says Dominick DellaSala, a senior officer at the World Wildlife Fund, who testified at the hearing. "There are clearcuts as far as you can see. This is exactly the problem. She refers to it as a healthy landscape, but there are no trees. Sediment flows right into the streams and kills all the salmon." She had another photo, recalls DellaSala. "It had a charred landscape with an elk burned to a crisp in the middle of the photo. She asked what I thought about the burnt-up elk. I tried to explain that as an ecologist, I'm concerned about the viability of the population, not the individual animal. She asked, 'Does that mean you're advocating people burning up in forest fires?' I said, 'Of course not.'" DellaSala sighs, exasperated. "I got the feeling it was hopeless."

The first thing you see when you enter Chenoweth's office is a cardboard box advertising ready-to-serve, smoked fillets of sockeye salmon—the species that tops the list of endangered Northwestern species. Next to that is a Rifle and Pistol Reloading Manual and an unfolded T-shirt that reads "Idaho's Endangered Species," with an arrow pointing to a cowboy and a

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farmer with a pitchfork. The shirt refers to a campaign quip of Chenoweth's. To raise funds, she held a series of endangered Sockeye Salmon Bakes, sponsored by local ranchers. At one, she told supporters, "It's the Anglo-Saxon male that's endangered today," a comment that recently earned her honorable mention in the white supremacist paper *The Truth at Last.* At another fishbake, asked if she takes the salmon's endangered status seriously, she answered, "How can I, when you can buy a can of salmon off the shelf at Albertson's?"

Chenoweth has imported her brand of verbal shoot-out to D.C. When Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, who's charged with enforcing the Endangered Species Act, introduced fifteen Canadian wolves into Idaho wilderness to control the elk population, Chenoweth bucked: "Not only have your wolves trespassed onto the lands of Idaho, but you have trespassed onto the Constitution of the United States." She says she has a better way to knock off the elk: "A hunting season in the national park."

"Well that's just off the scale," frets George Frampton, assistant secretary of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. "That kind of approach is at least a step or two to the right of James Watt. We've spent the past two years building flexibility into the act, and these radicals are ready to run that off the cliff."

Chenoweth's scorn for the Endangered Species Act stems from a deep phobia of any federal regulation. "There really is a war on the West," she says. "Back here in Washington they have more country-western stations, more western fashion, more people eat like we eat in the West. Yet they still try to kick us off our land. They treat us like a colony."

Her first weekend back in Idaho, Chenoweth held a town meeting on excessive government force. Thousands showed up, she brags, including the star guest, "Randy Weaver's attorney." In a few hours she stockpiled enough ammunition for six years' worth of potshots at Uncle Sam. For example, "Three armed federal Fish and Wildlife agents showed up on the property of this 74-year-old man," suspecting he had shot a wolf. "They claimed they had to look for a bullet and casing. Now, a bullet and casing is a tiny thing. This gives them license to search into every nook and cranny of his property." The local sheriff was on hand to stop them. "People in the West fight back. They're pioneer-spirited." She also gathered proof that armed federal agents were landing "black helicopters" on people's ranches. "In Idaho they say whiskey's for sippin' and water's for life, and when someone comes to fool with our water pumps it poses a threat to our people. Congress did not authorize these agents to play possum cop and Rambo and land on our ranches."

Like the other new Republican women, Chenoweth has a firm base of support in the religious right. She is a co-founder of Idaho-based Focus on the Family, the national group to the right of the Christian Coalition. "We attribute her victory to one thing," says Dennis Mansfield, the group's other co-founder. "We dropped 300,000 voter guides in 1,000 evangelical and Catholic churches and papered the cars of the Latter-day Saints. She was down by fourteen points before that and ended up winning by seventeen. This was a fabulous success of what you might call the angry evangelical."

Born Helen Palmer, Chenoweth grew up on farms in Kansas and Idaho. At Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington, she met and married Nick Chenoweth. Early on, the couple flouted federal rules. They wanted to build an airport in the small town of Orofino. But two big trees blocked the end of the runway. They applied twice for a permit and were turned down. So in the middle of the night, Nick and his father used a handsaw to fell the trees, then floated them down the river.

Like many of her female colleagues, Chenoweth claims her entry into politics was "purely accidental." In 1975 she and Nick were divorced. Helen was left with two kids and no job. The Idaho Republican Party, decimated by the post-Watergate backlash, had trouble filling its chair. Chenoweth took the job and quickly climbed the state party ladder. Two years later, she served as Senator Steve Symms's chief of staff. In 1986 she started Dave Leroy's gubernatorial campaign but was fired after two months because, says Leroy, "she did not get along with party leaders." In 1992 she decided to run for Congress, and although her name had never been on a ballot she felt she had a distinct advantage. "People approached me and said the incumbent [Larry LaRocco] could lose if the right person was running. And the right person had to be a woman. He wouldn't fight the same way with a woman as he would with a man."

Her chivalry theory worked. In the primary, six men, including Dave Leroy, wrestled each other in the mud pit and ignored Helen. They knocked each other out, and she emerged unsullied. Faced with an unknown candidate, the LaRocco campaign tried to tar her with extremism; in a series of Mary-and-Louise ads, two women in a diner fretted about Chenoweth's opposition to abortion. She shot back with spots that featured the candidate feeding cows and vowing to "show those boys in Washington a thing or two." Just before the election, it leaked that LaRocco had been involved with a woman in his tax firm, who was fired and then sued the firm. Voters rallied in defense of Idaho's women, and Chenoweth won.

Now in office, Chenoweth enforces proper relations of the sexes in other ways, too. The only time her mellifluous voice hits a bump is when talking about homosexuals. Chenoweth was one of only two candidates in Idaho to back an anti-gay rights initiative. "I have always been very clear about my position on things like that," she explains, gripping the sides of her chair. "We must have order. That could bring down the order of a society that has to live and recreate close to each other, and something like that would cause *extreme disorder.* A society *must have order.*"

"Let's go to this room, it's the loveliest room in the whole House," chirps Andrea Seastrand, leading the way to the Lindy Boggs Women's Reading Room, an airy parlor with salmon-colored divans and sweeping silk cur-

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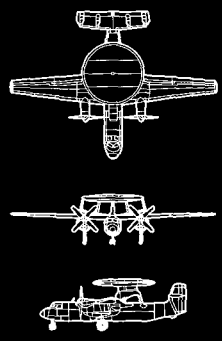

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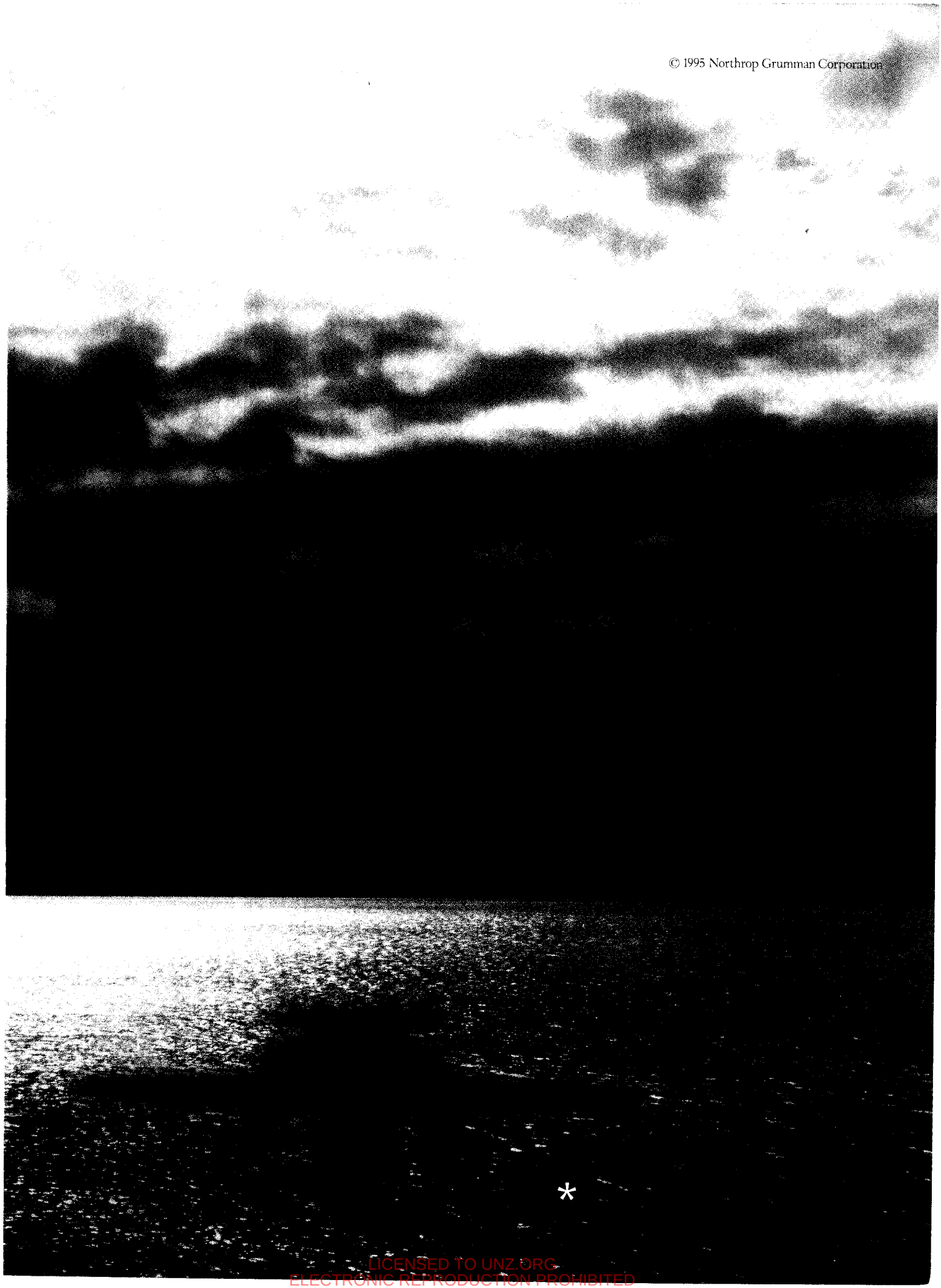

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tains. Although only 53, Seastrand has the air of a doting grandmother, with kindly blue eyes recessed in a fleshy face. Before the interview, she calls the attendant in for a history of the reading room (it was once the speaker's office, and a holding pen for Queen Elizabeth), taking careful notes. In the hallways, she clucks over Sonny Bono, who is wearing a neck brace, then congratulates his chief of staff on the birth of a baby: "You'll now see life in a whole new way!"

Her kindness informs a kind of innocuous politics that borders on Miss America-speak. Asked to define her first priority as a new legislator, she replies, "My greatest problem is that I want to solve all the problems of the world." A strong defender of the entire Contract with America, Seastrand gives her reasoning in nursery rhyme. While Linda Smith was threatening to scuttle the balanced budget amendment, Seastrand held a poetry reading on the House floor in its defense:

> They will not try a balanced budget, Sam I am.
> They will not try it with a mouse.
> They will not try it in the House.
> They will not try a balanced budget, Sam I am....
> You should try it, it's no slouch.
> You should try it with a mouse.
> And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to see it in this House.
> Sam I am.

Seastrand's personal crusade is to create a National Spaceport Agency to convert defunct military bases into ports for commercial space launching. Her proposals amount to standard, home-district pork, with an idealistic twist: "When you think about space, think of all those poor children trapped in the ghettos. They may want to take a trip into space someday, or even go live there."

Seastrand's optimism is rooted in a Catholic upbringing. She was born Andrea Ciszek, an only child of working-class Polish Catholics in Chicago. Her father, a bus driver, and her mother, a retail clerk, saved their money to send her to the Roman Catholic Maria High School, the source, she says, of her success. "When I look back on my achievements, I realize they are the results of those nuns." She attended DePaul, a Jesuit university, then moved to Salinas, California, to teach fourth grade. Two years later she married Eric Seastrand.

Like the other women, Seastrand's start in politics is linked to her husband. He served in the state legislature for two decades, and she ran his campaigns. After his death, his supporters urged Seastrand to run for his assembly seat. A year later she did and won. (She was elected Republican leader in 1992.) In three years, she was known mainly for the decorations in her office—an alabaster statue of Jesus Christ and three Bibles propped on her desk. The only bill she sponsored lifted regulations on the size of bread loaves. Still, when Michael Huffington's seat came open, Seastrand jumped in.

She entered the race with the distinct advantage of 80 percent name recognition. Her opponent, Walter Capps, a new-age religion professor at U.C.-Santa Barbara, was little known off campus. Yet Seastrand stayed out of sight, skipping at least a dozen debates, in a strategy designed to hide her weak spot: in a district that consistently polled 70 percent pro-choice, Seastrand dragged a long paper trail of pro-life activism. In the 1980s, she co-founded the Crisis Pregnancy Center in Salinas, a service that drew frequent complaints from the local Planned Parenthood for luring in clients by claiming the center performed abortions. Capps only brought up abortion once, after an anonymous supporter mailed him a tape of a speech Seastrand gave at the Grace Bible Church on March 27. Portions of the tape are worth excerpting:

> We also as Christians have been hoodwinked into thinking that there is a separation of church and state. And that is not true.... Feminism with its wicca and witches and all that are in, and family is out. Fornication and condoms are in; love, faithfulness in marriage is out.... I think California has been given many signs: floods, drought, fires, earthquakes, lifting mountains two feet high in Northridge. The signs are all here. And yet it just takes us people—people who turn from His ways. The biggest ones, the biggest businesses are pornography. We probably have the most adulterers living here in California, child pornographers and molesters, divorce, family breakups, all of that evil. California and America need your prayers.

Asked about the Grace Bible Church speech today, Seastrand becomes agitated. "Well I never made those statements. That's just what my opponents say. I'm not going to fall into that trap." When reminded of the tape, she demurs. "Well, it was taken out of context and so on." Unlike the other Republican women's, Seastrand's constituency gives her a stake in hiding her more extreme views. When she ran for office, she changed her position on funding for abortions in cases of rape or incest. These days, she tries to be careful. Abortion is "not on the agenda," she insists, and says she can "work well with Republican women who have differences." She elaborates, "Social issues are important but we can't have blinders on. There's whole new discoveries happening out there, and I feel like Isabella listening to Columbus as he talks about his plans for a new world."

The Republican freshwomen insist they are not merely shock-troops for a social counterrevolution. Smith, for one, says that if the National Right to Life Committee decides not to support her because she votes for the welfare bill, "then they'll just have to not support me." Still, it is social issues that seem truly to mobilize them. Already they have scuttled the leadership's efforts to keep abortion out of the first 100 days. In the debate over the crime bill, Pat Schroeder introduced an amendment to fund police protection for abortion clinics. "All of a sudden they went nuts," recalls Schroeder. "Gingrich said block grants should be used to fund a, b and c, so I just added one. They panicked, mostly because they hate to be shown as wolves in designer clothing, and they were very unhappy to be put on the record on this one."

Then, in March, Smith put herself on the record. She, Chenoweth and Seastrand wrote to members of the House Appropriations Committee asking to amend the rescission bill to discourage states from paying for abortion in cases of rape and incest. Representative Gerald

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Solomon, who heads the committee, latched on to the idea. Only when forty Republican moderates, led by Maryland's Connie Morella, wrote a letter to Gingrich was the amendment killed. "I guess it will just be a bigger challenge to stay together next year," sighs Morella, who chairs the remnants of the women's caucus.

The caucus is a definite casualty. The new women have shattered the easy bipartisan peace of years past. Last year, caucus members worked together to launch an unprecedented fifty-eight bills. This year, things are likely to be different. "These guys bend over backwards to separate themselves from women's issues," says Nita Lowey, co-chair of the caucus. "They came here with another agenda, and they'll get their issues out on the floor, and the Republican leadership won't be able to stop them." •

An urban high-school teacher's tale.

RACE, O.J. AND MY KIDS

By Mark Gerson

Among the legions of devotees of the O.J. Simpson trial in the United States, some of the most devoted are the five classes of sophomores I teach at an inner-city high school in Jersey City. For my students, the Simpson trial is something of an obsession, a sentiment that is, I concede, encouraged by this self-confessed O.J. junkie. This fascination is not simply prurient or voyeuristic (though there is no doubt some of that); the trial has been a terrific teaching tool that has helped to illuminate aspects of the American history curriculum I teach. For one, the interest the students show in the case facilitates—and enhances—their understanding of the criminal justice system. Because of the O.J. case, they understand the multifaceted meaning of the jury system; the role of the judge, lawyers and witnesses; how and why evidence is admitted and impeached; and the significance of terms such as direct examination, cross-examination, contempt of court, hostile witness and many more. And there is more. Kids love history when they can see justice and injustice, fairness and unfairness in it—and when they can take sides. O.J. allows them to do that, and about far more than just the trial itself.

The best example is provided by the Constitution, on which we spent more than two months. Amendments four through eight are about crime, and O.J. was the vehicle for studying them. Take the discussion of the jury as delineated in the Sixth Amendment. We covered this amendment in early January, which was perfect because that was when Robert Shapiro was demanding that O.J. be tried right away. My kids reasoned immediately: Shapiro wants a speedy trial, just as the amendment says. Right. But the "public" aspect of the "speedy and public" trial part of the amendment caused some disagreement. This amendment, Rhonda declared, makes no sense. Why? I asked.

"It says you get a 'public' trial in front of an 'impartial jury,' right?"

"Yes."

"How is O.J. going to get an 'impartial jury,' if the trial is in 'public'? Everyone in Los Angeles knows about the case, and the media is making it worse. Ain't no way O.J. is going to get a fair trial under these conditions."

"If it was not public, Rhonda," Walt added, "we wouldn't be able to talk about it all the time."

"It's not for your amusement, Walt," Rhonda shot back. "It's for O.J.'s innocence."

That, for my students, is no laughing matter. No more than four of my 110 students think O.J. Simpson is definitely guilty and few are willing to admit the possibility that he might be. This faith in Simpson is strongest among black girls. They enforce something resembling social control to govern opinions on the case. One girl last week suggested, hey, the case against O.J. isn't that crazy. Bad move. She was viciously attacked until she admitted that, yes, she was just kidding: of course O.J. is innocent.

Why is O.J. so important to them? All but a few of my students are black or Hispanic, and O.J.'s is a racial case. They have a substantial emotional investment in Simpson's innocence, the origin of which is not clear. When I mention that I think O.J. is guilty, they dismiss my opinion with a smile accompanied by the explanation that, of course, I wouldn't understand. Though my students identify with Simpson on racial grounds and for racial reasons, they must not have internalized the case too deeply because they are not offended at my belief in Simpson's guilt. I am merely naïve, nothing worse. And at least I admit that O.J. will never be convicted, even though I am wrong in believing that he is guilty.

Why, my students asked, do you think that O.J. will not

MARK GERSON teaches high school in Jersey City. He is turning his experiences into a book for the Free Press.

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be convicted even though he is guilty? Simple, I replied. At least one juror is bound to hold out. While almost all disagree with me about O.J.'s guilt, my contention that he will be acquitted regardless has produced some spirited discussion. Wanting to explore this issue, I handed out an article from *The New York Times* by Kenneth Noble that showed that the overwhelming majority of blacks believe O.J. to be innocent, while the inverse is true among whites. Many students reacted viscerally to this, charging Noble with everything from "racism" to "ignorance" to being a "poor writer." While my students are well aware of the role of race pervading the case—especially in the relationship between Nicole and O.J.—they refuse to concede that the jurors might vote for O.J. because he is black. The notion that some blacks might vote to acquit O.J. because of his race is, to these students, profoundly offensive. Race might be a reality in this case in a thousand small ways, but it will in no way affect the ultimate decision of the jury. They insist that their belief in O.J.'s innocence has nothing to do with his race. O.J. should get off because he did not kill Nicole and Ron.

But they are not willing to leave it at that. Like most observers of murder trials, my students have a psychic need to find the real killer; such crimes cannot go unaccounted for. My students are more than willing to supply the real culprit. One student suggested that Ron Goldman killed Nicole before killing himself and then throwing away the knife. Another believes the dog did it. Shenia suggested that Al Cowlings, Simpson's best buddy, did it. Bryant believes the killer is O.J.'s son. Philip blames "that fag dude who wants to marry O.J."; that would be Kato Kaelin, Simpson's houseguest. Even the smartest students are willing to give more credence to the most outlandish theories than to the prosecution's.

Jon, a bright student, had his own scenario: O.J. was shaving and cut himself. Kato took the blood from the shaving cut, brought it to the crime scene and dumped it. Why, I asked, did O.J. collect his blood after he cut himself shaving? Jon called me a racist, and that was that. When Jon or others call me a racist, it is not meant viciously. They know that I cannot be a racist (what kind of racist would want to teach at their school?), and this charge is always leveled without rancor. It is usually a shorthand way of saying, "Shut up. I don't want to continue this discussion anymore."

For instance, another student, Bryant, called me a racist in one such discussion last week. "How, Bryant, can you call me a racist for thinking O.J. is guilty? Shenia thinks O.J. is innocent, but she thinks that A.C. did it. A.C. is, of course, black."

"That's O.K. for Shenia. She black. You ain't." True enough.

While no non-white student believes O.J. did it, few are upset about the crime itself. Simply, they do not like Nicole; again, this sentiment runs especially strong among black girls. Many students disapprove of interracial relationships, and this accounts for some, though not all, of their animus toward Nicole. Because O.J. is the accused in a trial that has assumed such racial significance, my students cannot take their anger out on him. So they dump it all on Nicole.

How? Eunicia said that Nicole got what she deserved as a result of messing with a black man. Wait, I said, if you think that it is wrong for O.J. to marry a white woman, doesn't he deserve some of the fault? No, Eunicia added. Women control these types of situations, and Nicole roped O.J. in to get his money. If it weren't for Nicole, O.J. would have stayed with his first wife, Marguerite, who, of course, was black.

But wait, I pressed. When O.J. left Marguerite for Nicole, O.J. was a national hero and Nicole was just a kid—just a few years older than you, in fact. Can't you imagine a situation in which Nicole was so awed by O.J.'s fame and fortune that she simply fell for him? No, again, I clearly did not understand. Nicole was the woman, and O.J. was the man. If the relationship was ill-fated from the start, there is no question whose fault it was.

What, I asked all my classes, about the beatings? Even if you do not believe that the prosecution has proved its case, you can surely deplore the wife-beating that no one denies.

"Wrong," Shenia responded, "the beating did not bother Nicole too much, so why should it bother me?"

"Why," I asked, "do you think the beatings did not bother Nicole? She sounded quite frantic and desperate to me on that 911 call."

"It was just for show. Otherwise, she would have left him."

Another student pointed out that, in fact, Nicole did leave. But no matter, according to Shenia: she did not leave soon enough. If she did not leave immediately because she wanted his money or fame, then she was playing with fire—and we all know what happens to people who do that. The discussion continued from there.

Sholanda: "Look at what has happened since the marriage. Nicole was a slut. She gave some other guy oral sex in O.J.'s house. She had many lovers—even before she and O.J. married! It is only right that he became very jealous and took out his jealousy in some way."

Eunicia: "Nicole stayed, didn't she? If she didn't like it, why didn't she leave?"

Sylvia: "If Nicole were a black woman, she would have fought back. No black woman would take that."

Maxine echoed an especially common belief: "Nicole hit O.J. first. Of course he was going to hit her back. If she did not want to be hit, she should not have hit him first."

I was somewhat shocked the first time I heard this. "Maxine! Don't you think it is one thing for a woman to hit a man and another for a man to hit a woman?"

She looked confused. "No."

Usually I let opinions fly freely, but I decided to draw the line here. "Listen. Under no circumstances ever is it O.K. for a man to hit a woman. If a woman hits a man, he should at most gently restrain her, but never, never hit her."

Maxine and the others were unconvinced. "Mr. Gerson, why do you say that?"

"It is very simple. Men are stronger than women.

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Much, much stronger."

"Then you obviously have not seen the women in Jersey City."

While my students view everything through the prism of race, they are hardly concerned with gender at all. Not one black girl identifies with Nicole as a woman; they identify instead with O.J. as a black person. Intellectually convinced that there are few significant differences between men and women (even when brute force is an issue as with O.J. and Nicole Simpson), they may not, I am afraid, have the basis to back up their distrust of men with action or, more accurately, non-action in their personal relationships.

The anti-Nicole bias is most prevalent in students from broken homes—which is most of them. Walt, a student from a strong two-parent family who is always vocal, honest and forthright, never complements his defense of O.J. with criticism of Nicole. He thinks that Kato did it. Nicole is the unfortunate victim, in no way an accomplice to her own murder. But this is reflected in Walt's personal life; when he wants to date a girl, he writes her impassioned, eloquent love letters. He knows how to treat women, and he knows that O.J. does not.

How about Ron Goldman? Though he is clearly a big player in this drama, he is only mentioned in relation to Nicole. Was he sleeping with Nicole? How did O.J. kill Nicole if Ron was there with her? In ignoring Goldman, my students are doing just what the nation is doing. Maybe we ignore him because he is rarely mentioned in the news media; maybe we ignore him for the same reasons the media does (whatever they might be). But it certainly is strange that Goldman, as much a victim as Nicole, is rarely mentioned, and the tragedy of his death is rarely felt. I wanted to discuss this with my kids, but did not know the answer myself, nor even where to begin to look for answers.

My students are unimpressed by the defense team and have not made a hero out of Johnnie Cochran, as Kenneth Noble reported many blacks in Los Angeles have. They admire Cochran's courtroom techniques but no more so than those of prosecutors Christopher Darden or Marcia Clark. They are disgusted by the evasions and mistruths that have characterized the arguments from the defense team, though I admit that my relentless exposition of their deplorable conduct may have been a factor here. I also admit being a bit embarrassed at the way I handled the preview of F. Lee Bailey's cross-examination of Mark Fuhrman. Bailey, I explained, is a living legend—the best cross-examiner in the world—and someone they should watch and be prepared to tell their grandchildren about. Bailey had said, after all, that he was going to perform a "character assassination" of Fuhrman, and this was going to be entertaining if nothing else. Most were excited, did their homework and came back wondering what I was talking about. I came back wondering the same thing.

Though they believe Mark Fuhrman to be a vile racist, most of my students were impressed by his deftness on the stand. One of O.J.'s most fervent supporters in my top class came in after Fuhrman's first day of his cross-examination with a definitive judgment: that racist detective is slick. No argument there; my kids know a smooth character when they see one and will always accord him at least grudging admiration.

The Fuhrman testimony brought to light a deeper issue that tapped a nerve center for my kids: the police. My students have an ambiguous, complicated relationship with the police. On the one hand, several have police officers in their families and greatly respect the work they do. They know a lot of bad guys in jail and are grateful to the police for seeing to that. However, they see violent crime in their neighborhoods every day and are at a loss to why such blatantly illegal conduct exists in such plain view. An immediate answer is the racial one: my students believe that if their neighborhoods were white, the police would crush the crime. I was not in Jersey City during the Rodney King trial, but it occupies a major place in the psyches of my 15-year-old students; it tells them that the police are capable of vicious racism. Rodney King touches the rawest emotions, which in turn trigger a host of anti-police and anti-authority sentiments bathed in racial hostility.

This confusing array of emotions bodes well for O.J. While my students do not regard police as foot soldiers for a racist enterprise, or even necessarily as racists themselves, they are suspicious enough to blame the cops for aspects of the case that incriminate O.J. The police do not have to be in a conspiracy against blacks or O.J. to plant evidence. How, I have asked over and over again, did O.J.'s glove land in his backyard? Easy—the police planted it. How did O.J.'s blood get on the glove alongside that of Nicole and Ron? Simple—the police did it. How did the police get O.J.'s blood to plant it? Jon reiterated his shaving-cut theory, surmising that Kato and the police were in cahoots on this. How, I asked, did Kato apply the chemical solution needed to preserve the blood? Mr. Gerson, he responded, these are the police. They can do anything.

Bailey was certainly responding to this ambiguous relationship that many blacks have with the police, but his tactics did not impress my students. They were neither moved nor shocked by his constant invoking of the "N" word (maybe because they use it so much themselves) and never sympathized with Bailey. Bailey's theory that Fuhrman put O.J.'s glove in his sock like a Marine and subsequently dumped it at O.J.'s house—getting blood in the Bronco at some point—was neither accepted nor rejected. As Walt said, "Well, it could have happened, right?" Can't argue with that.

It was also Walt who came up with what I consider as damning a piece of evidence against O.J. as I have heard. Look, Walt suggested, at what happened when the cops called O.J.'s hotel room in Chicago to tell him, "Your ex-wife has been killed." O.J. responded, "My God, Nicole's been killed." How, Walt asked, did O.J. know the cops were talking about Nicole and not Marguerite?

"Walt," I responded, "that's a terrific point." One of the other students turned to Walt and asked, "Does that mean you think O.J. might be guilty?"

"No way." •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Viewing the Past

Draw up a list of rules for making a poor picture about a historical figure and you'll find that **Jefferson in Paris** (Touchstone) obeys them all.

1. Cast the leading role with an actor who is more bankable than appropriate. (Here we get Nick Nolte as Jefferson. Not untalented, but an actor with no sense of line in anything but present-day speech and no ability to treat his costumes as his clothes.)

2. Concentrate on the figure's private life, and disregard the public life for which he is remembered. (Apparently, except for one meeting with Dutch bankers, Jefferson spent his five years in Paris—1784-1789—wooing Maria Cosway and sleeping with Sally Hemings.)

3. Let the dialogue rely heavily on actual letters, which sound prosy, and add clichés as leaven. (Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, sometimes a gifted screenwriter, sinks in both swamps.)

This picture runs two hours and twenty minutes, but almost from the start, it seems breathless. Ismail Merchant, the producer, and James Ivory, the director, seem so eager to provide a sort of revolving backdrop for Jefferson's amours that they hurriedly sprinkle in a lot of historical glimpses: Jefferson's troubles with his older daughter, his views on slavery, Versailles court life, opera, medicine, Dr. Mesmer's séances, the first seethings of the French Revolution. It's as if a catalog had been drawn up and the filmmakers sighed with relief as item after item was checked off.

No force of character emerges from this Jefferson, no shade of greatness. And his amours are dull. Jefferson's reawakening of passion, when he meets Mrs. Cosway three years after his wife's death, has all the impact of a burp. Then there's Sally Hemings. This whole affair is still very much in historical dispute, but the film treats it as fact—or else there would have been no film. Jefferson's ardor here toward the teenage slave is at least as problematic as the verity of the story.

Much more, in large and small matters, is fumbled. Why didn't somebody hint to Nolte that, when one plays the violin, bowing isn't enough? The left hand also functions. Couldn't there have been more becoming wigs and makeup for Greta Scacchi, who plays Mrs. Cosway? Why are the French aristocrats *always* laughing? Did every scene of highborn frivolity have to be followed at once by a scene of peasant starvation? The picture opens in 1873, in Ohio, with a reporter's visit to the man claiming to be Hemings' son by Jefferson. (His account is a chief support of the whole Hemings story.) As this son, James Earl Jones, once a good actor, manages to be phony in about ten seconds. Couldn't the director have helped him? Did this man's wife need to sing "Free at Last" for the reporter in order to presage Dr. King?

Two roles are well done. Nancy Marchand is the abbess of the Paris convent where there is a school in which Jefferson enrolls his older daughter. Marchand gives the woman clarity and strength. Michael Lonsdale plays Louis XVI (the best-written role) with almost pathetic puzzlement.

James Ivory has often been indicted for caring more about décor than drama. No indictment here. He cares insufficiently about both. The drama is certainly wan, and Ivory gets surprisingly little out of the costumes by Jenny Beavan and John Bright, or out of the historical buildings that are used. Pierre Lhomme's camera is at its best in Jefferson's great kitchen, with lighting reminiscent of Chardin; otherwise, it's just adequate.

The worst failure is primary. After all this long film's fussing and flourishing, little has really interested us and absolutely nothing at all has moved us.

But wait. Honor to Merchant and Ivory for something else. Merchant Ivory Productions, aided by Sony Pictures Classics, have prepared new prints of nine films by Satyajit Ray and are presenting them now in New York. During the coming months, the entire bill will play in Washington, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco. Over the next two years it will play in most major American cities. Do not cheat yourself: see the entire bill. This is one of the film blessings of a lifetime.

Merchant, born in Bombay, first saw Ray's films in New York. Ray was Calcuttan and made his thirty-six films in Bengali, which limits their distribution in polylingual India. Merchant had come to the United States to pursue film producing, and when he saw *Pather Panchali* here, it changed the aims of his

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Circle of Friends. *Three Irish girl friends, one of them rather plain. One handsome Irish boy. Perhaps everything goes a bit too much the way we want it to, but it's all irresistible. (Reviewed 4/10/95)* **Dolores Claiborne.** *A salty Maine woman who is twice suspected of murder. Kathy Bates makes this Stephen King material large and ominous. (4/17/95)* **Martha and I.** *Warm and rueful remembrance in this Czechoslovakian gem about a Jewish actor and his loving German wife—just before and during the Nazi intrusion. (3/13/95)* **Mina Tannenbaum.** *Another Jewish story—in postwar Paris. Mina and her friend Ethel grow up together, discovering life and love and each other. Done with exceptional grace. (3/27/95)*—**SK**

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producing career. After he joined up with Ivory, an American, they made many of their films in India, and now they pay homage to their inspiration. A beautiful tribute.

So far in this Ray bill, I have re-seen only *Pather Panchali*, his first, made in 1955. (I've told the story of the five-year struggle to make that film in my review of his last work, *The Stranger*. See "Farewell and Hail," TNR, June 15, 1992.) I looked up what I wrote about that first picture, in 1958, and was relieved to see that at least I thought it engrossing; but it wasn't until the following year, when I saw *Aparajito*, the second part of the Apu trilogy, that I really began to appreciate the first part—and began to understand something of Ray's intent and stature, of his quiet heroism. From the start, unflinchingly, until his death in 1992, all Ray wanted to do was to celebrate his people in cinematic art. A great deal of that art is lovely.

Again, honor to Merchant and Ivory. And congratulations to all of us on our good luck.

Hal Hartley has had bad luck. The French actress Isabelle Huppert saw his film *Trust*, then wrote to him and asked to work with him. Unfortunately, Hartley responded, and the result is **Amateur** (Sony Pictures Classics). Huppert's shortcomings—chiefly, her reliance on her ability to suggest emotion through passivity—distort all the qualities that, up to now, have been admirable in Hartley's work.

For reticence, we get vacuity. For nuggets of suggestive dialogue, we get aridity. For simplicity, we get revue-sketch shorthand. Worst of all, throughout the film, Hartley's excellent eye seems clouded. He has usually framed shots with originality but without freakishness. Here there is no originality—and not even freakishness.

Huppert plays an ex-nun in New York who now writes porno fiction. She meets a man who has been thrown out of a window by a woman and, as a result, is now amnesiac. (He is played by Martin Donovan, a Hartley veteran, who I still think a good actor, despite all this.) Their joint investigation into the man's past to find out who he is, involves a porno ring and foreign-based crime.

Hartley's Catholicism, which usually has been subtly implied, is here used doughily. For instance, in a sequence in which Donovan watches a porno tape, he sits in front of a picture of the Madonna on the wall behind him.

Fast forward, Hartley. Or, rather, backward—to yourself and your own company of actors. Huppert, go home. •

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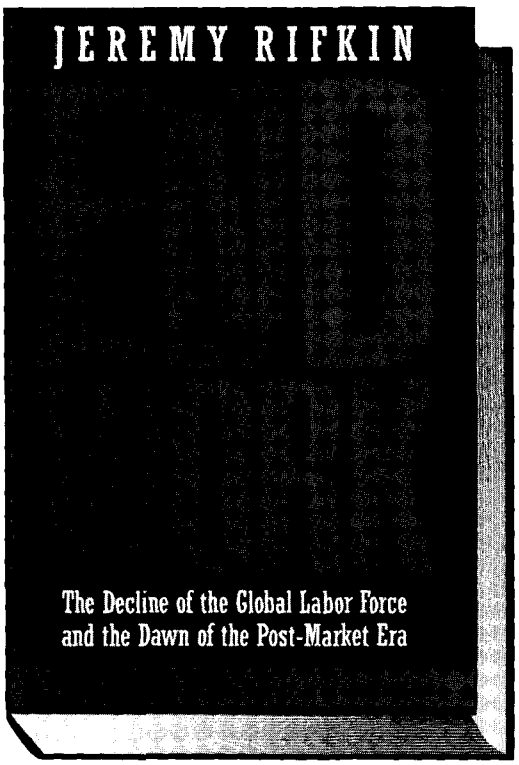

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Robert Brustein on Theater

The Director Who...

The compassionate case books of the neurologist Oliver Sacks—a British-born clinician working in the United States since 1968—have in recent years provided an astonishing source of material for theatrical artists. Harold Pinter's play *A Kind of Alaska*, the Robert De Niro-Robin Williams movie *Awakenings*, and Michael Nyman's minimalist opera *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* are a recent sampling of works based on Sacks's studies of the neurologically afflicted, their torments and their triumphs. Sacks's appeal to artists is easily explained. He is one of those physicians—another is the late R.D. Laing with his research into schizophrenics—who have helped shape the popular notion that what we usually think of as abnormal behavior may well be an expression of a special kind of genius.

At its most primitive, this idea can degenerate into such populist fantasies as *Forrest Gump* and its flattering assumption that being brain-dead constitutes a special form of wisdom. In its bureaucratic form, it has been responsible for such educationalist euphemisms as "the exceptional child"—a Teachers College catchall meant to describe both the specially gifted and the mentally retarded or physically disabled.

To be sure, scientists since Freud have noted a link between art and neurosis. And artists since Shakespeare have not only believed that "the lunatic, the lover and the poet are of imagination all compact," but have often equated aberrant behavior and visionary genius (as in Dostoevsky's Prince Mishkin). The latest of these celebrants is Peter Brook, who has dedicated the creative apparatus of his Centre Internationale de Créations Théâtres (based at the Bouffes du Nord in Paris) to a theatrical experiment based on Sacks's fine work on brain dysfunction. Now translated into English and transferred to BAM's Majestic Theater in Brooklyn, **The Man Who...** is a kind of fantasia on *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, supplementing terse dramatizations of Sacks's cases with episodes created by Brook, his dramaturge Jean-Claude Carrière and his actors after visits to hospitals and clinics.

In his program note, Brook writes, "For a long while, within our theater work, I have been searching for a common ground that could involve the spectator directly," adding that "whatever the social and national barriers, we all have a brain and we think we know it." That is true of course. It is also true that we all have a liver, a spleen and kidneys, but this no more narrows the awful gulf between us than the fact that we laugh and stand erect. Brook acknowledges that the moment we enter the brain "we are on another planet," but nevertheless persists in seeking One Worldism through theater experiments. His quest is admirable, but greater theater artists than he (Ibsen, Shaw, Strindberg, Wagner) have failed to accomplish similar messianic ambitions, while tougher, more trenchant observers, such as Virginia Woolf in *Between the Acts*, have managed to make tragic music out of our unhappy fragmentation. ("Now we are dispersed.")

Brook's desire to unify diverse audiences works best in production. As we have come to expect, the acting and directing are the results of many months and even years of preparation. This international five-man troupe is rarely caught in a crude or clumsy activity. Their gestural grace and vocal beauty are remarkable, their theatrical means economical. They also have the capacity to instill a hush in the rapt audience amounting almost to reverence. Still, though the evening lasted only 100 minutes, it somehow seemed to me almost as long as *The Mahabharata*, which lasted nine hours.

The problem is that, whatever Brook's prodigious theatrical gifts, playwrighting is not among them. The piece grows tedious because it displays no dramatic progress. Intriguing scenes are played out, one after the other, with little cumulative effect. Episode after episode makes essentially the same point. Case studies, being contributions to science, do not need to be shaped like dramas. But a play is essentially a journey, and the circular movement of *The Man Who...* keeps walking us back to the same place.

The theatrical means, however, are splendid, and visually there is much to enjoy. The setting consists of a simple beige matting, two television monitors (one decorated with a rose) and some plain white angular furniture in the style of Robert Wilson. Along with a single musician, the Iranian Mahmoud Tabrizi-Zadeh, the four actors—the German David Bennent, the Japanese Sotigui Kouyate, the African Yosha Oida and the British Bruce Myers—speak accented English and come from different countries or continents, but somehow meld into a cohesive ensemble.

Since all of these actors are male, some of Sacks's more interesting case studies (such as the 87-year-old woman who recovered her sexuality as a result of the recurrence of a venereal disease) are omitted, but the therapeutic transactions remain intact. Alternating between playing doctors and patients, the actors perform simple exercises of derangement: a man who cannot identify physical objects except through poetic metaphors ("a heap is a badly made crowd"); a music teacher who mistook a coat stand for one of his students (and his wife for a hat); a fellow who thinks his left leg belongs to an amputee; a man who can only shave one side of his face; a victim of Tourette syndrome whose ticks cease only when he plays ping-pong or dances; a patient who by memory can geographically locate every building on the Place de la Concorde.

Some of these patients are morose and depressed, others accountably happy. One of them notes, "In the old days they'd lock us up with the loonies, but now we're in all the best books." Whatever the patients' moods, the actor playing their doctor responds with the gentleness, humor and humanity that recall the Chekhovian qualities of Oliver Sacks. ("What a lovely man," he wrote about one of his patients, a description best applied to himself.) After eleven or twelve of these vignettes, *The Man Who...* ends with beautiful color displays of brain scans on the video monitors, like stained glass windows created out of EEGs.

There is, inevitably, an element of voyeurism in witnessing these enactments, and also traces of victim art. It's like being on a tour of a mental hospital accompanied by sympathetic guides. What helps us transcend our discomfort is the artistry of the troupe and the dedicated mission of their leader. But by the end of the evening, I couldn't help feeling that Peter Brook is the director who mistook a case book for a play.

Death Defying Acts, now playing at the Variety Arts Theatre, is a considerably more modest presentation than *The Man Who...* but one that gave me a lot more pleasure. In a crisp elegant production directed by Michael Blakemore, this trio of one-act plays by David Mamet, Elaine

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May and Woody Allen is superbly acted (by a cast of seven) and designed (by Robin Wagner) in a manner that evokes the heyday of great '60s comedy.

Mamet's "An Interview" is perhaps the slightest of the three but also the most contemporary, a colloquy between an attorney and his interrogator that turns out to be his entrance exam for hell. In a small room illuminated by shafts of light on gray walls, the lawyer is continually pressed to admit what he continues to deny: that he once buried a lawnmower. It is a metaphor for a life of legal deception. His crime is that he "passed the bar and neglected to live forever." "Are you saying there are no honest lawyers?" asks the attorney. The interviewer only smiles. Strongly acted by Paul Guilfoyle and Gerry Becker, the skit furthers Mamet's ongoing vendetta against the legal profession, begun in his previous one-act play "Oh Hell."

Elaine May's "Hotline" is about a middle-aged hooker who swallows some pills, then changes her mind and attempts to seek help from a suicide counselor. It is simply hilarious, distinguished by May's deft control of character and the funniest performance I have seen in years by Linda Lavin. Playing Dorothy, the call girl with a broad Long Island accent, redheaded bangs and uncontrollable fury, Lavin provides a classic demonstration of how the best comic acting proceeds from an interior of pain. Trying to get through to the suicide hotline before she gobbles the pills, she can't get even the attention of 911 until she pretends that a bomb has been planted at Police Emergency. Dorothy has epic encounters with a telephone system populated by non-English-speaking operators. ("I didn't say she was an asshole because she's Puerto Rican, I said she was an asshole *and* Puerto Rican—just like you're an asshole and not a Puerto Rican! See?")

Isolated and alone, her life is one loud bark of despair: "I don't have any friends. Why? Because I'm *unpleasant*! Haven't you noticed?" Sliding into narcosis from her overdose, she falls asleep, wakes up and crawls toward her phone—to inquire after her messages! Her desperation is matched by that of her hotline contact (played by Becker), who makes it his mission to save her: "Tell me where you live.... You owe me another twenty fucking years of our life." Finally he discovers her address—"I found you, I found you, I found you!"—in a climax that establishes the most intimate relationship between two people who never manage to meet. I suspect "Hotline" began as a telephone monologue, in which form it might have been more potent, but even extended into dialogue it is a powerful piece of

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comic theater.

Woody Allen's "Central Park West" is another relationship play that showcases Linda Lavin's superb acting talents. Visiting her friend Phyllis (played by Debra Monk) in her West Side apartment—a decorated living room festooned with the obligatory African sculpture—she appears as a bourgeois matron named Carol in a blond wig and yellow Bloomingdale's cloth coat, looking like a cross between Barbara Walters and Kitty Carlisle. Someone has been sleeping with Phyllis's husband, Sam (Paul Guilfoyle), and Phyllis is ready for divorce. (Sam has agreed to keep paying for her Sunday *Times*, though that was not part of the nuptial agreement.)

Inevitably, it is revealed that Sam's lover is Carol, which Phyllis knew all along ("You're the all-American whore—they should put your diaphragm in the Smithsonian"). Carol protests that "It's sensual, yes, but it's more—we share feelings and dreams." But after Carol has confessed to her nerdy husband Harry (Gerry Becker) her plan to marry Sam, Sam himself reveals that he has fallen in love with a young actress and abandons Carol. ("Sometimes there's God so quickly," says the vengeful Phyllis.)

"Central Park West" is loaded with (very funny) one-liners, as well as heavy autobiographical baggage. But it never transcends its form to become a real satire on vacuous and bored wife-swappers, possibly because the dramatist is a member of that class; he is not on the outside looking in. But at its best, the play evokes the incisive wit that we associate with an earlier, more confident age of satire, and it is an occasion for superb ensemble work. Simply to watch the way Lavin flutters her hands constitutes a master class in great comic acting.

I have little room and even less stomach to review Nicky Silver's **Raised in Captivity** (The Vineyard Theater). I'll simply say it deserves its artificial directing and hysterical acting, because the best way to handle a defective model is to put your foot on the gas and hope nobody notices that the car's a lemon. Apparently nobody did, since Silver is being touted as the legitimate heir of Christopher Durang. His efforts at cuteness owe a lot more to Richard Greenberg and Terrence McNally. *Raised in Captivity* is not so much clever as high-strung, and the AIDS tragedy with which it predictably concludes is just another example of how our theater tries to dignify a shallow evening and inoculate itself against criticism. An anthology of these plays could well constitute a map of the empty-hearted '90s. •

Every American's favorite ancestor.

The Air Around Tom Paine

By Sean Wilentz

I.

Every twenty-ninth of January, Thomas Paine's admirers assemble at his old farm in New Rochelle, New York, to celebrate his birthday and to lay a wreath on his monument. In recent years it has been a small collection of history buffs, freethinkers, quondam socialists and local patriots—a sweet-tempered assembly, but somewhat dispirited in these right-wing times, and aging fast. Even the youth section, on the wrong side of 40, has felt frayed and discouraged, despite the pleasures of seeing friends and listening to soaring excerpts from *Common Sense* and *Rights of Man.*

Thomas Paine: Collected Writings
edited by Eric Foner
(The Library of America, 906 pp., $35)

Thomas Paine: Apostle of Freedom
by Jack Fruchtman Jr.
(Four Walls Eight Windows, 557 pp., $30)

Thomas Paine: A Political Life
by John Keane
(Little, Brown, 644 pp., $27.95)

It was not always so. Beginning in 1825, sixteen years after Paine's death, hundreds of Jacksonian artisans and deists turned out annually for birthday festivities in cities from Albany to Cincinnati. After 1850, immigrant freethinkers picked up the tradition, joined by native-born democrats such as Walt Whitman, who addressed the Paine commemoration in Philadelphia in 1877. Later in the century, however, the Paine cult dwindled, as radicals found more modern heroes to honor, and as the old Enlightenment currents of militant anticlericalism evaporated. Paine would occasionally resurface in rebel circles as a sort of all-purpose emblem of American dissent—among free-speech advocates and sex radicals at the turn of century, among Popular Front Communists in the 1930s and 1940s, and even in one of Bob Dylan's more obscure lyrics from the late 1960s—but on the left in general Paine's legacy faded; and conservative Americans, if they recalled Paine at all, did so uneasily, mindful of Theodore Roosevelt's characterization of the man as a "filthy little atheist."

Now a mini-Paine revival has been launched, in ways that defy any simple explanation of the vagaries of American historical reputations. In the mid-1980s, one of Ronald Reagan's cleverer speech writers began slipping patriotic snippets from *Common Sense* into the president's major addresses, heralding supply-side economics as a glorious effort "to begin the world over again." Suddenly the stigma that earlier generations of conservatives attached to Paine disappeared; and in the intervening years right-wingers have begun embracing him as a conservative revolutionary—a foe of high taxes and lavish government expenditures, and a prophet of unfettered American free enterprise, his anti-Christian religious writings either forgiven or forgotten. In 1992, thanks largely to support from the right, Congress authorized the construction, with private funds, of a Paine memorial in the District of Columbia.

Very different concerns have stirred interest in Paine among liberal and leftist scholars. For decades, they stressed (and quietly lamented) the "bourgeois" character of Paine's radicalism, as evidenced in his stubborn defense of private property, in his faith in free commercial markets, in his libertarian individualism. Although his writings prickled with class resentments and egalitarian aspirations (so the arguments went), Paine never quite broke through to the sort of comprehensive critique of economic relations that would come during the nineteenth century, above all in Marx. Now, however, with Marxism laid low, with markets and private property vindicated, Paine has come in for a reevaluation. Perhaps Paine's radicalism was not such a dead end after all. Perhaps the metaphysics of the proletariat obscured an appreciation of Paine's deeper political wisdom. Perhaps it is best to ground thoughts of social and political justice where Paine did, in liberal democracy and the rights of man, and not in class struggle and the abolition of alienation.

Specialists in American history have had additional reasons to reconsider

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Paine. Over the years, historians have tried to arrange the political ideas of the revolutionary era into an assortment of tidy categories. According to one school, revolutionary Americans divided up into planter democrats and capitalist elitists. According to another school, the basic division pitted egalitarian back-country localists against market-oriented urban cosmopolitans. There are historians who say that the Revolution sprang from classical republican fears of corruption, and there are historians who say that it sprang from Lockean liberalism, and there are historians who charge that the Revolution's democratic stirrings were paradoxically linked to slavery and the myth of white superiority.

Paine cannot be understood according to any of these descriptions. He was a democrat and an egalitarian, but he was neither a nostalgic agrarian nor a narrow-minded localist. He spoke the republican language of virtue and commonwealth, but he was a liberal with respect to individual rights and commercial expansion. His democratic vision was hardly predicated on the subjugation of blacks; indeed, he was an abolitionist well before the term had entered into common American usage. As J.G.A. Pocock has admitted, Paine's writings simply do not fit "any established radical political vocabulary" of the late eighteenth century. Put differently, if we were to judge matters solely from Paine's output (now collected and edited by Eric Foner in a splendid Library of America volume), virtually every major existing interpretation of American revolutionary ideology would collapse.

None of which would be too troubling if Paine were not so important. He was, without question, the American Revolution's most popular and consequential pamphleteer. *Common Sense*, published in January 1776, sold as many as 150,000 copies in cheap editions in its first year, an astounding figure for the time; and it was widely credited for galvanizing pro-independence opinion. *The American Crisis*, Paine's series of wartime political commentaries, was read by troops and civilians alike, and emboldened the patriot effort at some difficult moments. And Paine's influence expanded many-fold when, after his return to his native England, he published his famous two-part reply to Edmund Burke on the French Revolution, *Rights of Man* in 1791 and 1792.

Nor was Paine merely a best-selling publicist. His contributions, political and intellectual, were more profound, changing the very substance of revolutionary politics in an era of democratic revolutions. Reflecting in 1806 on his own long

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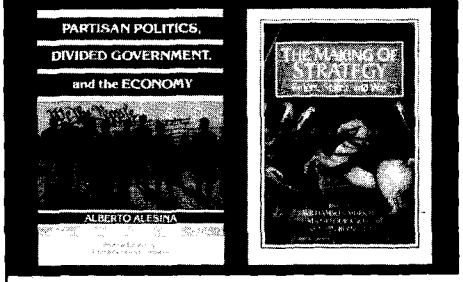

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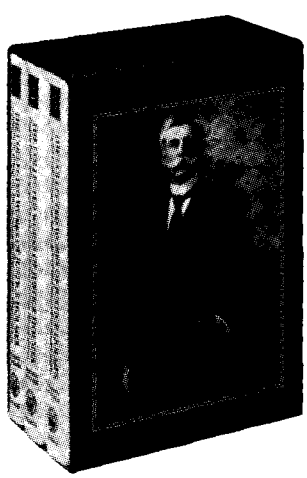

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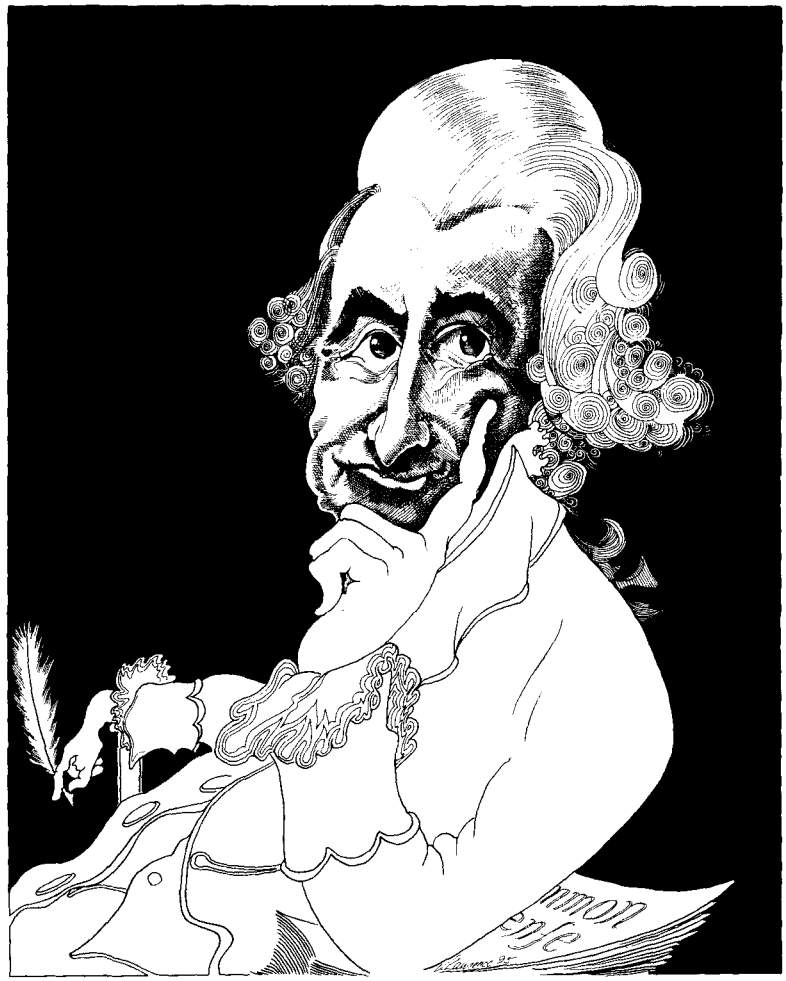
political career, the aging John Adams wrote curtly, "Call it the Age of Paine." Coming from the conservative Adams, it was an embittered observation; but it was not a wholly unwarranted one.

To be sure, Paine lacked Madison's realism and originality as a political theorist or Hamilton's frightening genius as a financial visionary. In his occasional role as a practical politician, he performed honorably but usually ineffectively. But in his finest writings, particularly in *Common Sense*, Paine defined, better than any other Founding Father, the American revolutionary cause as ordinary patriots came to define it—not as a trans-Atlantic tax revolt or struggle for independence but as an effort to give birth to a new social and political world, a cause for all mankind. Later, in *Rights of Man*, he delivered the most influential defense of democratic principles to appear in his lifetime. And as a delegate to the revolutionary National Convention in Paris, his speeches and articles on behalf of moderation (especially in opposition to the execution of Louis XVI and to the Terror) offered eloquent, if in the short-run doomed, testimony on the necessity for even radical regimes to respect the rule of law.

How Paine wrote was as important as what he wrote. Not that his literary efforts were completely unprecedented. Before Paine, numerous Americans took time off from their usual employments to compose political pamphlets. The modern arts of political insult and satire that Paine practiced so brilliantly had a long history, dating back to the city-states of the Renaissance. (Defoe and Swift were two of the more obvious influences on Paine's style.) But Paine was the first notable American writer to live solely by his pen. And he was the first important American pamphleteer to reach beyond the elite eighteenth-century political nation in order to address directly a new audience of farmers, craftsmen and laborers on the principles of government.

The pithy phrases that still make Paine so irresistible—"these are the times that try men's souls"; "government, like dress, is the badge of lost innocence"; and (ridiculing Burke's apologies for the French aristocracy) "he pities the plumage but forgets the dying bird"—amounted to a new democratic style of political talk. Anyone could understand it. Its power was inversely proportional to its erudition. As Paine himself suggested, he crafted his style to deflate the verbiage of his pompous antagonists. (Paine on Burke: "How ineffectual, though gay with flowers, are all his declamation and argument.") With its plain metaphors and its limpid logic, Paine's language implied that the mysteries of politics were not so mysterious at all, that even rude reasonable men could comprehend public affairs and act upon their comprehension. Paine thus opened channels of democratic persuasion that at their worst have inflated clever demagogues (witness the plainspoken Perot) but at their best have inspired some of our finest political leaders, most notably Lincoln, who was a Paine admirer.

Both the style and the substance of Paine's work derived from his fundamental belief in the power of human reason, and his generally optimistic view of the possibilities of human progress. Such optimism cut against eighteenth-century Calvinist America's widespread assumptions about human depravity. Even Paine occasionally gestured to mankind's darker side: government, he observed in 1776, was necessitated "by the inability of moral virtue to govern the world"; and twenty years later, in the wake of the Jacobin Terror, he repeatedly remarked on how, without self-limiting constitutions, democracy would degenerate into tyranny. For the most part, however, the freethinking Paine took a more generous Enlightenment view of human perfectibility, rejecting the prevailing gloomy cyclical interpretations of history while insisting that progress would come from mankind's own efforts, not through divine intervention. Apart from his fellow rationalist Jefferson, no leading American of the era equaled Paine in his belief that, as he put it, "human nature is not of itself vicious," or that men's reason could lead them to transcend their passions and narrow self-interest and make a better world.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Still, Paine was not exactly an Enlightenment Jeffersonian. Although he eventually came to move in some of the highest political circles in three countries (counting among his friends Jefferson, Washington, the Marquis de Lafayette, Charles James Fox and, before he broke with them, John Adams and Edmund Burke), Paine spent his first thirty-seven years in utter obscurity, as a humbly born, small-town British corset-maker, sailor, shopkeeper and excise officer. When he moved to America in 1774, aided by a modest reference letter from that other ex-craftsman Benjamin Franklin, he gravitated to the world of Philadelphia's plebeian taverns and debating clubs. It was in that world, and not in the drawing rooms of the gentry *philosophes*, that his ideas and his vocabulary took shape. His chief associates were, like himself, self-taught men of the practical arts, whose appreciation of science and reason owed as much to their everyday workshop experiences as to their reading. They were city men, not rural squires (or, for that matter, back-country

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yeomen); mercurial men of improvement, commerce and trade, not Jefferson's stolid, self-reliant tillers of the soil.

The difference, as historians have noted, was fundamental to Paine's republicanism. Jefferson, for all his faith in reason and progress, retained some of the classical fear that rapid commercial and material improvement would breed moral corruption and decline. The Jeffersonian vision of a republican empire of liberty was basically a static one, of independent small farmers occupying the vast expanses of the American West, recreating as nearly as possible the pristine egalitarian social order that had supposedly existed in bygone Anglo-Saxon times. Paine's republicanism, by contrast, was thoroughly dynamic and anti-nostalgic. It regarded commerce, like science, as a civilizing force that would help release men from their mental and material fetters; and it regarded history and tradition as oppressive weights to be challenged at every opportunity and, if found unreasonable, to be cast aside.

At the same time Paine's republicanism had a much sharper democratic edge than the republicanism of the Jefferson gentry. In ways that Jefferson and his peers could only imagine, Paine and his constituency felt the enormous and unending condescension of hereditary aristocracy as a matter of personal insult. Those on top (even in America) scorned men like Paine as "meer mechanicks" (or, in Burke's notorious phrase, "the swinish multitude"). And yet, Paine demanded, had he and other ordinary men not been endowed by nature with the same reasonable faculties as their privileged betters?

Indeed, he continued, had the productive artisans and farmers of America and Britain not contributed far more to the public good than the well-born ladies and gentlemen who had never produced a thing in their lives? "Male and female are the distinctions of nature, good and bad the distinctions of heaven," he wrote in *Common Sense*, "but how a race of men came into the world so exalted above the rest, and distinguished like some new species, is worth inquiring into...." Those inquiries constantly led Paine to mock the absurdities of aristocracy, and to proclaim the axioms of what he called "representation ingrafted upon democracy": simple government, minimal government, government beholden to a broad citizenry, government subordinate to society, and not the other way around.

It was the vehemence of Paine's polemics, his utter rejection of the old regime, that most shocked his detractors and most impressed his followers. No previous American pamphleteer had written as boldly as the author of *Common Sense*:

> England, since the conquest, hath known some good monarchs, but groaned beneath a much larger number of bad ones; yet no man in his senses can say that their claim under William the Conquerer is a very honorable one. A French bastard landing with an armed banditti, and establishing himself king of England against the consent of the natives, is in plain terms a very paltry rascally original. It certainly hath no divinity in it. However, it is needless to spend much time in exposing the folly of hereditary right; if there are any so weak as to believe it, let them promiscuously worship the ass and the lion, and welcome. I shall neither copy their humility, nor disturb their devotion.

Such effrontery was unheard of even in opposition circles, and it sent conservatives into sputtering rages against what Adams called Paine's "yellow fever." Whereas earlier British dissenters (and even most American ones) had hoped to restore some idealized version of a balanced British constitution, Paine called for sweeping away the entire mess and beginning anew, with a wholly republican government, freed from any traces of those "two ancient tyrannies," monarchy and aristocracy. "Lay then the axe to the root," he declared in *Rights of Man*, "and teach government humanity."

Paine was much sketchier, however, when he discussed the structure of his envisioned republican government. He did outline some fundamentals in *Common Sense*: unicameral state assemblies based on a broad franchise, a national legislature, frequent elections, a written constitution securing individual rights, including rights to property and religious freedom. He also took a hand, briefly, in some practical constitution-making, first in Pennsylvania in 1776 and then in Paris in 1793. And in the second part of *Rights of Man*, and later in his pamphlet *Agrarian Justice*, he devised specific programs to alleviate the conditions of the British and European poor. Still, compared to Madison and the other American Founding Fathers, men who were engrossed with the intricacies of state-building, Paine seemed relatively uninterested in such matters.

Paine's seeming lack of insight was not just a matter of temperament. It was linked to his most basic ideas about republican government, and about what he saw as the intrinsic opposition between government and society. Left to its own devices, Paine believed, mankind was harmonious. Individuals entered into relations with each other in order to fulfill individual desires; the sum of those relations was what he meant by society, a wholly natural and reasonable entity ever

SECRET AFFAIRS
Franklin Roosevelt, Cordell Hull, and Sumner Welles
IRWIN F. GELLMAN

THE PRESIDENT: Paralyzed from the waist down. Hides disability from a public never permitted to see him [redacted]

THE SECRETARY OF STATE: Old and frail. His [redacted] highly contagious and usually fatal disease, kept as secret as his wife's Jewish ancestry.

THE UNDER SECRETARY: Married three times but, when drunk, prefers sex with [redacted] boys, and [redacted]

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attentive to the common good. It was government, established by a parasitic hereditary caste—a caste that stood *outside* society—that was the cause of human misery:

> Society is produced by our wants and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness *positively* by uniting our affections, the latter *negatively* by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions.... Society is in every state a blessing, but government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil.

Madison and the other Founders saw things differently. Society, on their view, was wracked with divisions of class and sectional interest, which republican government needed to balance and mediate. Hence their absorption in the complexities of constitutional architecture. For Paine, however, the major problem was to liberate society from monarchy. Once that was achieved, elaborate government structures beyond a democratic legislature and (he came to add) a judiciary would be unnecessary, indeed harmful. Hence his relative reticence about constitutional details, apart from his insistence that democratic constitutions were imperative in order to keep even the simplest republican governments in line.

II.

Paine's vaunting of society over government helps account for the contradictory nature of the current Paine revival. There is plenty in Paine's writings to encourage latter-day liberals and radicals, from his contempt for privilege and tradition to his humanitarian concern for the poor and disenfranchised (that "mass of wretchedness," he wrote, which had "scarcely any chance than to expire in poverty or infamy"). Since he attacked government as the cause of human wretchedness, however, his writings can be read from another angle, as the precursor texts of contemporary conservatism, including its angrier populist strains. And since he believed that republican America had freed itself from the Old World's political and social vices, Paine often projected a cheerful view of this country as a classless society of unbounded opportunity (with "the generality of people living in a style of plenty unknown in the monarchical countries")—the sort of rhetoric that has become an evasive and effective conservative reply to critics of America's enduring inequalities.

The paradoxes and the ironies of Paine's life add to his aura of ambiguity. At one level, he was the archetypal free-booting internationalist radical—a man always in motion, disheveled, prone to drink, consumed by politics. Yet he was also a determined American nationalist, generally supportive of the Federal Constitution that many of his fellow democrats opposed. In the 1780s, he allied himself with some of America's most conservative financiers, the sponsors of the Bank of North America. Having delivered what remains the most memorable defense of the French Revolution, he wound up paying for his troubles by languishing for nearly a year in a Jacobin prison, where he only barely escaped the guillotine. For all of his celebrated contributions to the Atlantic revolutionary epoch, especially in America, he died a lonely, besotted death in Manhattan in 1809, reviled by many for his impious views on religion.

Making sense of it all is a large assignment, made all the more difficult by the absence of any sizable collection of Paine's papers and correspondence, most of which were accidentally destroyed in a fire more than a century ago. Not surprisingly, most of those biographers who have dared to tackle Paine have stressed a particular aspect of his thoughts and of his career, looking for the key to his mind. (Among the exceptional studies are David Freeman Hawke's dyspeptic but thorough *Paine*, which appeared in 1974, and Foner's *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, which appeared two years later.) And always, for scholars as for speechwriters, there has been a temptation to force Paine's ideas and activities into congruence with more recent political doctrines. Two new biographies, for all of their strengths, suggest that these hazards have not entirely disappeared.

Jack Fruchtman Jr.'s book is the simpler one. It tries very hard to find a comfortable place for Paine within the established eighteenth-century intellectual context. Contrary to Pocock and others, Fruchtman believes that Paine derived much of his thinking from the main lines of dissenting Anglo-American thought, that he ended up concocting a creative blend of classical republicanism and Lockean liberalism. At the same time, Fruchtman contends that the "constant thread" in Paine's work was spiritual, and that it arose from his "underlying faith that God's spirit and vitality permeated the universe." Paine's deist tract, *The Age of Reason*, assumes new importance as the culmination of Paine's religious ponderings and as the most explicit formulation of what Fruchtman considers the "essentially religious character" of Paine's social and political thought. Although taken up with matters of government and revolution, *Common Sense* and *Rights of Man* were, it seems, early expressions of Paine's quest for a "higher spiritual consciousness" beyond oppressive official dogma. Paine's most revealing philosophical links appear, by these lights, to have been his membership in various spiritualist groups in the latter years of his life, including a band of Paris illuminists called the Social Circle, which gathered around Paine's radical friend Nicholas de Bonneville in the late 1790s. Here, Fruchtman suggests, Paine finally made sense of the spiritual longings that had shaped his work from the beginning.

The natural religion that Paine came to embrace was unquestionably a fascinating current in the Atlantic radicalism of the 1790s and the early decades of the nineteenth century, as E. P. Thompson disclosed in his studies of Paine's sometime-associate William Blake. And long before the 1790s, Paine, who had been raised in a Quaker milieu, had certainly rejected Christianity, along with any other set of beliefs based on scripture. (He is reported to have told John Adams as early as 1776 that he viewed "the Bible at large" with contempt.) Still, despite Fruchtman's claims, it remains unclear how much influence Paine's evolving religious ideas had on his political writings, let alone on their popular reception. His most important American pamphlet, *Common Sense*, was actually filled with Biblical references and quotations in support of his arguments that kingship was crypto-papist and ungodly—a bit of dissembling that suggested Paine's primary motivation was to stir the passions and prejudices of his mostly Protestant audience, not to seek a higher religious consciousness. *Rights of Man* contains references to the Creator, but little else that testifies to his spiritual exploration.

Nor, when he finally got around to writing them up, were Paine's unorthodox opinions particularly rich. *The Age of Reason* is marked by Paine's effective slashing, simple style; and as the major text of Anglo-American free thought, it went on to awaken untold thousands of small-town Baptist-belt Americans from an unthinking acceptance of Biblical authority. Yet its engagement with the Bible is remarkably derivative, delivering capsule versions of European skeptical thoughts, a sort of *Reader's Digest* rendering of Volney and Voltaire. Paine became literal-minded and even a bit obsessive in tracking down inconsistencies and falsehoods, blind to the Gospels' metaphoric qualities, handling Christianity as little more than a set of superstitions designed to prop up a corrupt and reactionary Old Regime. Paine, the man of Reason, could imagine a scientific and reasonable Creator, but he was incapable of appreciating the Bible's poetic and ironic God. And, to

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add to the irony of his own situation, his criticism of religion seemed completely out of touch with religious realities in the United States, where Protestant Christianity, severed from state power and organized in voluntary evangelical congregations, was turning into a major vehicle for individual freedom and social reform, not aristocratic reaction.

John Keane's book is weightier than Fruchtman's, and it makes some fresher contributions to the historical record. Although there is little in the book concerning Paine directly that Paine's previous biographers have not uncovered, Keane has scoured the British, French and American archives (including some untapped manuscript holdings) in search of the people and events that touched Paine's life. As a result, Keane deepens our appreciation of Paine's context. The book is particularly helpful on what have been, until now, the more shadowy portions of Paine's career, namely the years in England before his departure for America and his decade in France from 1792 to 1802. Keane's description of the young Paine, though it is based on a good deal of speculation, offers a plausible account of how an artisan's son and a denizen of provincial ale houses could have gathered the intellectual forces that later produced *Common Sense* and *Rights of Man.* The sections on France dramatically narrate Paine's awakening to the fact that the revolution he had championed was turning into a tyranny.

Keane's Paine emerges as nothing less than "the greatest public figure of his generation" in Europe, England or America. John Adams's remarks aside, it is a judgment that few of Paine's contemporaries would have shared, even when Paine was at the height of his popularity. (In revolutionary America, and even in some European circles, George Washington loomed as the greatest hero of the age.) Still, Keane, who is British and sees Paine in his full Atlantic context, has a point. Paine's immediate impact on his time was far greater than that of any number of his more celebrated English and European cohorts, including, as Keane notes, Rousseau, Voltaire, Kant and (for that matter) Burke.

It was Paine, more than the *philosophes,* who found a popular audience for his unbridled attacks on dogma and tradition. And it was Paine who, as Keane puts it, "pushed and dragged republicanism into the modern world" by democratizing its first principles. Of course, as Gordon S. Wood and others have argued, Paine's achievement reflected larger social and political forces that were in motion well before Paine wrote *Common Sense*—a loosening of traditional bonds, a growing resentment among the middling and lower classes at any claims to nobility and privilege. But it was Paine who defiantly gave voice to the democratic republican temperament as no one else had, and who then spread his message all around the Atlantic world.

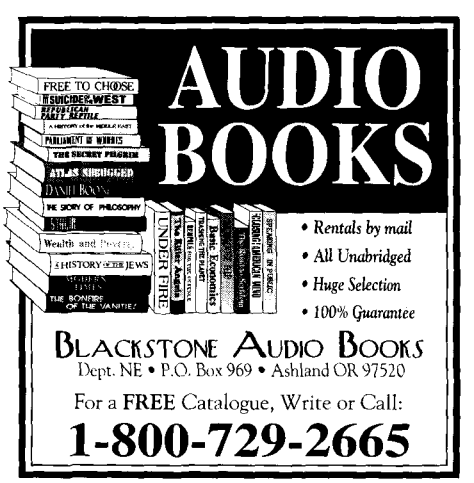
Such a figure, Keane continues, cannot be fully understood by referring to a single aspect of his thought or temperament, or even to two or three aspects. Rebutting Clio Rickman, Paine's English friend and one of his first biographers, Keane denies that Paine was simply "incorrupt, straightforward, sincere." He was a complicated personality as well as a complicated thinker, at once self-effacing and egotistical, sexless and passionate—and a notorious name-dropper who wrote on behalf of the anonymous masses. He did have a few unshakable beliefs—in progress, in Newtonian science and in human reason—but he had no fixed set of opinions. The strength of Keane's study lies in this insistence on his subject's intricacies, which he shows developing by fits and starts over a long and eventful political life.

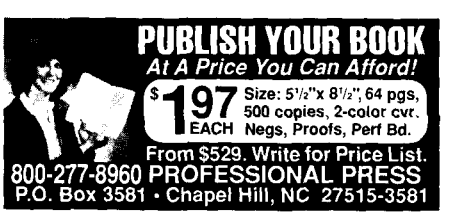
Yet Keane, in good Paine style, is interested in establishing Paine's living significance as well as his place in history. He has thus written what he calls a "broken narrative," one that bids his readers to consider the relevance of Paine's thoughts today, "thereby encouraging them to tinker with their own sense of reality." A great deal of that bidding concerns questions of politics and economics that have loomed especially large among liberal and leftist scholars and activists over the past several years—the relations between state and civil society, the connection between market society and human justice, the very meaning of democracy.

At their best, Keane's mediations between the past and the present show that many of the questions that Paine posed remain fresh and challenging two centuries later. Paine's distinction between society and government (which Keane, overstating matters, regards as the great original insight of *Common Sense*) can be read profitably as an early recognition of the primacy of civil society in any democratic political order. The social programs outlined in *Rights of Man* and *Agrarian Justice* can be taken, without too great a stretch, as historical grounding for the continuing discussions about the provision of social welfare without debilitating social costs and overweening state bureaucracies. Yet Keane's "postmodern" and "transgressive" Paine also comes across a bit too much like a post-Marxist social democrat (or a post-Thatcher, post-Reagan welfare-state liberal), looking for ways to square distributive justice with capitalist markets.

According to Keane, Paine recognized in "remarkably modern ways" that "market mechanisms for structuring decisions about investment, production and consumption" are inevitable in any healthy democratic order. Still, Keane contends, Paine also believed that purely self-regulating markets are unworkable without "nonmarket support mechanisms," including direct government intervention. As his main example, Keane cites Paine's support for state government price controls to check the inflation that hit wartime Pennsylvania in 1779 and threatened to bring the local economy to a standstill.

The example is not exactly telling. The Pennsylvania price-control movement, far from "remarkably modern," arose from very traditional assumptions about the duties of a corporate state to provide the populace with foodstuffs and other necessaries at what was called a "just price." And, as Keane discloses somewhat confusingly, the impact of the attempts to restrain prices in 1779 proved disastrous, as merchants and farmers held back from the market, causing greater scarcity than ever. Paine's reaction was to renounce such measures once and for all—a "modern" recognition on his part of the limits to effective government power in dealing

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with the fluctuations of the market. Paine would look instead to fiscal reform and to the curtailment of paper-money emissions as the cures for economic turbulence—"modern" positions, to be sure, but ones that in the aftermath of the Revolution fell very much in line with the views of the most sophisticated (and politically conservative) American bankers. Paine may not have been a bourgeois publicist in quite the sense that those words convey today—but his affinities for laissez-faire developmental economics were greater than Keane allows.

III.

What, then, is the legacy that emerges from the current revival of interest in Paine? Are his admirers (and his critics) forever doomed to interpret him in their own image, or to conflate part of his thinking with the whole of his thinking? Perhaps. But there are ways to evaluate even more carefully Paine's continuing importance without elevating him as a beacon for the present. In the crucial work of respecting the pastness of the past, he needs to be set once again alongside his other immortal contemporaries. Jefferson and Paine developed two versions of American revolutionary republicanism; Paine's republicanism, in turn, meshed closely with the ideas of other men who boldly wrote for the ages, but whose visions were circumscribed by their times. In particular, Paine's ideas bear close resemblance to those in another work commonly misread as prophecy, the other great book published in 1776, *The Wealth of Nations.*

At first glance Adam Smith and Thomas Paine may seem an unlikely pairing. Smith, the Oxford-educated Glasgow ethics professor, had some republican and rationalist sympathies, but he was largely uninterested in the political affairs that were the sum of Paine's existence. And on some basic philosophical matters, Smith and Paine disagreed. For Smith, the individual pursuit of self-interest would create the greatest social good. Paine championed the pursuit of reason. Smith saw society as a constant collision of competing individuals that produced harmonious results. Paine saw society as a harmonious whole, held together by recognized common interests.

And yet, as Foner pointed out in his earlier monograph on Paine, the two men's modes of thought were essentially alike. Both thought of themselves as practitioners of Enlightenment science. Despite their differences, they both believed in an underlying accord of human interests. They both defended the primacy of society—and in particular commercial society—against meddlesome government. They both opposed established institutions and customs such as primogeniture and state churches, which they believed interfered with society's natural workings. They both ripped away at the prevailing traditional systems of authority as wasteful and parasitic, and sought to replace them with a new order of liberty. And they both encouraged new engines of prosperity (such as, in Paine's case, the Bank of North America) to widen commercial opportunities for ordinary men.

But Paine was no more a prophet of modern democracy than Smith was a prophet of modern capitalism. Both men could not help but think of human liberation in terms of a society of small independent producers, where the intensification of commerce would dissolve social privilege, encourage perfect competition and check the growth of glaring inequalities. Paine's revolution, at once political and economic, would, like Smith's revolution, destroy the government racketeers and unproductive classes forever and put in their place the unrefined, industrious common citizenry.

That revolution did not completely succeed anywhere in the world. In the United States, where it succeeded far more than elsewhere, the existence of chattel slavery as a major component of commercial society deeply corrupted (and vastly complicated) the natural workings of democracy; and even after its abolition, slavery's crippling heritage has endured. Morever, to the extent that the revolution did succeed, it prepared the way for a society very different from anything Paine imagined: a new world of divided political parties, of national and international corporations, a world consisting chiefly not of independent producers but of wage earners and salaried employees, a world of new sorts of connections and patronage and birth privilege, less rigid than the monarchical society of old but hardly a world of perfect competition and equality of opportunity.

The irony, of course, is that the ideas of simple government and laissez-faire that Paine exemplified are now invoked by the chief beneficiaries of this new world (and their political allies) in order to ward off any attempts to interfere with their power—and their bottom line. Worse still, since the mid-nineteenth century, the liberating individualist doctrines of 1776 have been used regularly to cloak a smug and callous disregard for the poor. While reading Paine's words, there is a temptation to turn the tables on this cynical rhetoric, to revive a different usable Paine, the friend of the despised common man, the radical who once remarked (puckishly quoting James I) that "a rich man makes a bonny traitor."

But not so fast. Paine offers only so much consolation to those who would seek to lessen the political and social inequalities of modern American democracy. In particular, his optimistic view of republican society as a web of cooperation has proven hopelessly naïve. When, in *Rights of Man* and *Agrarian Justice,* Paine dared to broach the divisive politics of property and interest—what Madison called, in The Federalist, No. 10, "the most common and durable source of factions"—he did so strictly with reference to the Old World, secure in his belief that the United States would escape such strife thanks to its republican governments. And when, at the very end of his life, he began to notice some growing inequalities in America, he blamed them on Federalist plotters who wished to restore the old monarchy, not on any ills common to republican society.

Yet those ills have existed; and most of the better moments in our democratic history have come about not through the workings of a consensual republican general will, but from the clash of interests. Those interests have been more profoundly antagonistic than Paine imagined, and organized politically as separate interests in ways that Paine would have abhorred. However attractive his desires, however humane his sympathies, Paine's basic principle of republican unity has not stood up well in American history.

Still, there is much to remember and to honor about the man and his labors. His questions, if not always his answers, are of enduring significance. His bustling, forward-looking republicanism helps to put the American Revolution in its full and proper light, as a genuinely radical revolution, a thorough break from the past. His skepticism about received truths, although overly optimistic about human reason, is a powerful antidote to the lure of dogma. For all their ambiguities, Paine's writings did help to change the world forever. They unleashed ideas about privilege, liberty and democracy that have resounded ever since.

Curiously enough, the memorial at New Rochelle sums up Paine's fate quite well, though it does so in the style of the ironic God that Paine could never quite comprehend. The farm site had been given to Paine by the state of New York after the Revolution, as a token payment for his patriotic services. The actual monument, a battered old bust set upon a shaft, stands near the spot where Paine was buried. But there he no longer lies. In the early nineteenth century, the British political writer William Cobbett,

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who had been one of Paine's fiercest opponents but later converted to radicalism, arranged to have his remains dug up for transport back to Britain and reburial. Somewhere along the way, the bones were lost. They were never recovered. So Paine rests nowhere. Or better, he is everywhere. •

Aspic of the Novel

By James Wood

A Private View by Anita Brookner

(Random House, 242 pp., $23)

Anita Brookner's novels are expert copies of nineteenth-century models. They appear once a year, as regular as postage stamps. They are delicate, gloved, malevolent and watchful; but they are also dead, or perhaps posthumous—for they honor their dead teachers faithfully.

Here, for example, is some of the first page of her latest book, *A Private View*, her thirteenth. George Bland, the novel's hero, has gone to Nice to recover after the death of his old friend, Michael Putnam:

> He had sought a restorative, conventional enough, after the death of an old friend, Michael Putnam, who had inconveniently succumbed to cancer, just when they were enabled, by process of evolution, or by that of virtue rewarded, more prosaically by the fact of their simultaneous retirement, to take their ease, to explore the world together, as had been their intention. They had waited for too long, and the result was this hiatus, and the reflection that time and patience may bring poor rewards, that time itself, if not confronted at the appropriate juncture, can play sly tricks, and, more significantly, that those who do not act are not infrequently acted upon.

Cut these words and they would ... what? Crumble? This is dust, but superior dust, the carbon of something once fiery. The refrigerated syntax and the moral flounce are directly from Henry James; but note how meticulously the writing mimics a nineteenth-century literary world—or a caricature of one. Nice, that basin of Victorian leisure, predicts for us a classic "literary" geography; Brookner's hesitations ("some forty years ... inconveniently succumbed ... not infrequently") suggest a high-minded opacity; the meditation on "time and patience" promises a novel of classic themes; Brookner's talk of "virtue rewarded" and time's punishments for the sluggish evokes a narrator of antique moral discriminations. And then, that frail excuse—"a restorative, *conventional enough*"—thrown in superstitiously, like salt, to protect the passage from just such a charge. Conventional enough, indeed.

This natureless prose is alive only to a world already anointed by literature. So Brookner has always been drawn to the Balzacian stability of apartment blocks, boarding houses and lakefront hotels. Her characters, such as George Bland in the new book, all live in a small area of London fenced on the north by Maida Vale and on the south by South Kensington. Produce is bought at Fortnum and Mason, Selfridges, Harrods; Sunday walks are taken to the National Gallery and the Tate. George Bland lunches at "his club," and when his old friend Putnam was alive, the two used to take tea at what Brookner calls "the better London hotels." Bland and Putnam are known throughout the novel only by their surnames, for no apparent reason except that this, too, is one of those literary conventions. They are like Bouvard and Pécuchet without the fun. The raffish or down-at-heel in Brookner's world live not in genuinely raffish areas, but in the 1950s world we know from the novels of Muriel Spark and Angus Wilson—the shabby-genteel hotels of South Kensington. There is much tea.

A Private View has Brookner's usual plot, familiar to readers of her earlier novels, such as her best-known work, *Hotel du Lac* or *Look At Me*. The frame is Jamesian—innocence confronting corruption. In most of Brookner's novels, a dull and blameless protagonist is almost seduced by an enchanter, who offers a vision of freedom. These enchanters teach that the world is always open to the greedy, the amoral and the uncomplicated. The meek and cowed protagonists—who are often only children, now caring for aging parents—envy them, agree with their assessment of the world. They are tempted, they waver on the brink of freedom, but finally they crawl back into their behavioral burrows, a little wiser and sadder.

In *Hotel du Lac*, Edith Hope is tempted by the diabolical Mr. Neville, who offers her a loveless marriage contract and promises her that "without a huge emotional investment, one can do as one pleases." Edith decides that Aesop was wrong: in real life, it is never the tortoise who wins the race, she says, but always the hare. The fable exists, she thinks, to make tortoises feel better about themselves. She turns Mr. Neville down. In *Look At Me*, the mousy librarian, Frances Hinton, who narrates the novel, falls in love with a glamorous married couple, the Frasers. She describes herself as a beggar at their feast. Nick Fraser reminds Frances

> of the unfairness of life, and excited one with the idea that one might, if he wished, become a part of that unfairness, always reserved for the beautiful, the strong, the imperious, the healthy, the decisive, leaving the meek to inherit the earth or rather to live on the promise of that inheritance.

A Private View is not very different, though it is one of Brookner's deeper and better books. George Bland, as proper and calm as his name suggests, is beginning his sad, if wealthy, retirement in an apartment near Hyde Park. He is a bachelor; his dear friend Putnam has bequeathed him a lot of money, but he has no use for it. His repose is disturbed by the arrival of a garish, selfish, shallow and erotically rapacious young American woman, Katy Gibb, who moves into the apartment opposite his. Bland is at first irritated by her and then enthralled. He falls in love with her, and decides to propose marriage. Though thirty years separate them, it is an arrangement that will profit them both; she needs his money to set up a business, and he needs a new life. Watching her, Bland realizes that a life without scruples is the way to live, for "freedom is to take what one wants, without bothering to cover one's tracks." Unsurprisingly, Katy is uninterested in Bland, and finally abandons him, though not before relieving him of a large check.

There is much that is finely acute here, and Brookner pierces Bland's delusion beautifully. But there is something vulgar about the simplicity of Brookner's vision: the good always lose and retire to lick their moral sores, while the bad always win, thanks to their grotesque health. Brookner herself believes in this unfair asymmetry. In an interview with John

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Haffenden, in 1984, she complained, like Edith Hope, that while in Trollope "the bad are seen through," in real life the bad win through.

> It affects me bitterly—I despair of it—that hypocrisies can be entertained and impudent behaviour preferred, betrayals laughed off and promises broken.... I am very envious of careless people. It's about not being able to be like them, and how the rewards of being that sort of person are infinitely greater.

Asked if she saw writing as self-therapy, she replied that she wished it had worked. Certainly, sadness is the truest thing in her books. Like Liszt's unnaturally long fingers, Brookner's pain is the affliction that has enabled her art.

Still, this race of the good and bad is fed by caricaturing both sides, with the result that we do not believe in either. *A Private View* holds its protagonists in a claw of caricature. George Bland's life of order seems unlikely, and has the odor of an old magazine advertisement: "He padded into the bathroom and went through his usual ritual, the brushing of the teeth, the smoothing of the hair, the discreet application of a sweet-smelling lotion." Katy Gibb, his antagonist, is heartlessly American. Her chief crime, beyond this Americanism, appears to be that she does what she pleases, and gets up rather late. She has been out in California with a guru-therapist named Singer. "Bland could see this man, this Singer, clearly a charlatan, bronzed and smiling, with very white teeth, and a Hawaiian shirt disclosing abundant gray fuzz." Thus Brookner uses her characters to sanction her own caricatures. Katy Gibb says things like: "I was getting a lot of negativity back there. I could feel my stress level going up." Or: "I'm feeling very good about myself, very positive. I'm in the moment, you know?"

The novel would probably survive all this, if Brookner did not make her characters such pharaohs of self-knowledge; they are mummified in strips of ratiocination. It is not just that her protagonists are too dull to believe in. It is that they *know* this dullness and tell the reader about it. Fay Langdon, the narrator of *Brief Lives*, explains: "I was hapless, timid," abiding by her mother's dress code, "brown in the autumn, navy in the spring." In *Hotel du Lac*, Edith informs us: "I have held this rather dim and trusting personality together for a considerable length of time." Bland, we learn, "thought of himself, quite accurately, as an honest but faintly colourless man, not lacking in courage but disinclined to take risks"; "he had better accept the fact that he was a dull character ... he was staid by nature." Does anyone know himself so completely? Just in case, Brookner ticks the margin: "he thought of himself, quite accurately..."

In his *Notebooks*, Henry James exquisitely palpates a plan for *The Ambassadors*. His innocent abroad, Lambert Strether, will find himself utterly changed by his discoveries in Paris—"the idea being the revolution that takes place in the poor man.... But all this might be—oh so light, so delicately summarized, so merely touched." Though Brookner is often a sensitive analyst, she presses her theme where James merely touches. Her insistence on George Bland's uncanny self-knowledge means that he must be aware all the time, unlike James's Strether, of the precise lineaments of the "revolution" occurring within him. On the verge of his imagined new life with Katy, Bland realizes that he has never really lived: "But knowing, as he now perceived, that his life had been lived without his active participation." Once his ardor has cooled, "he saw his madness for what it was, the final upheaval of an unlived life." But Bland appears to "discover" something that he has always known, and that Brookner has told us from the beginning—that he has not lived. It is difficult for this to have the power of revelation, or the spin of revolution.

Brookner hardly helps here by marking Bland's revolution a little too obviously as a classic moral crux: "That a man should seek his own freedom seemed to him the most moral as well as the most natural thing in the world." Again, does anyone really taste freedom at such a calm table? Bland's compound eye—locust-like, he is usefully gifted with seeing around and behind his own moral dilemmas—is a long way from the soul's ordinary smudged window. In place of the darkened rooms in which most of us decide our lives, Bland sits dutifully in Brookner's brightly lit fictional space; and he shrivels somewhat in the glare. He is not a sufferer; he has become an author.

The difference between Brookner and James, one suddenly realizes, is that James's characters are radically innocent. The corruption that threatens them is frightening not because it is so corrupt but because they are so innocent: the spider will find its perfect bridegroom. Brookner's characters are only radically dull. They are not innocent, but indeed full of self-knowledge. Because of this we do not believe in their assessment of corruption, and we do not care enough about their spoliation. When the mild-mannered Edith Hope in *Hotel du Lac* speaks of "the sybaritic life," we are not sure that she—and hence Brookner—is not merely confusing corruption with having a good time.

This is the softness at the heart of Brookner's moral account-keeping. Where James—sometimes preposterously—enlarges his moral categories, Brookner debases them. It is a kind of metaphysical whining, in which the good are not good but merely "meek" or "decent" or "blameless," and in which the bad are not bad but merely "strong" or "healthy" or "impudent." Ethics dissolves into manners; sorrow becomes self-pity; and the abiding tone of Brookner's books is never tragedy, but that curdled English juice, disappointment.

One should be fair. There is much that is fine about Brookner. Though her prose often surrenders to cliché, it often resists it, too; she has great integrity, and she has some of the delicacy of nineteenth-century fiction. Interestingly, though her books are dreary, they are always passionate—one recalls her book about French art criticism, *The Genius of the Future* (1971), and its happy quoting of Diderot: "Whatever the art form, it is better to be extravagant than cold." But her caricature of life as a botched moral fable rests on literary caricature.

She is read, perhaps, because people like to breathe the sharp mountain-air of nineteenth-century judgment—which is not a bad reason to read at all. Some Anglophile Americans, perhaps, read her as a kind of tax they feel they must pay for access to an English world of Fortnums and the London Library. Some English readers, one suspects, hear in Brookner the softly domesticated romanticism, doughty-drab, that is the characteristic tone of postwar English writing. Much like George Bland, the poet Philip Larkin believed that, as he once put it in a letter, "the happiest way to get through life is to want things and get them." Since one will never get them, one might as well brew the tea of self-pity. Elizabeth Bishop, who would have none of this English boarding-house elegy, replied to it rather sweetly in her poem "Crusoe In England," which imagines a dour, Larkin-like Crusoe giving way to self-pity on a damp and cloudy island: "I told myself / 'Pity should begin at home.' So the more / pity I felt, the more I felt at home."

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Off the Road

By Sven Birkerts

Jack Kerouac
Selected Letters 1940-1956
edited by Ann Charters

(Viking, 629 pp., $29.95)

The Portable Jack Kerouac
edited by Ann Charters

(Viking, 625 pp., $27.95)

Because of who he was and what he wrote—and in spite of the same—Jack Kerouac has achieved that apotheosis reserved mainly for our damned darlings: he lives now in the theme park of cultural images. Not quite James Dean or Marilyn Monroe in stature, his sad-eyed countenance is nonetheless reproduced everywhere on T-shirts and literary calendars. He sells khakis and may yet turn up as a shill for running shoes. He is, never mind his own repudiations in later life, the very emblem of "beat" and "hip" sensibility, which is periodically resurgent in a way that its offspring, the hippie counterculture, is not. And indeed, if commercial products have any sway over our collective imagination—and do they not?—that madcap star is about to blaze forth for a new generation. Francis Ford Coppola is working on a film of Kerouac's cult classic, *On the Road*, a major CD-ROM package on the life and writings is scheduled for spring release, and Ann Charters, Kerouac's biographer, has assembled both *The Portable Jack Kerouac* and the *Selected Letters*.

The Kerouacing of America, that marketer's dream, would seem to be a possibility once again. But oh, what a little daylight—and hindsight—can do. The Kerouac who helped spark the rucksack revolution of the late '60s was still the yea-saying avatar of adventurous youth. His cigarette, extended thumb and jug of Tokay betokened an innocent sort of corruption and a way out from the rigor mortis of suburbia. With the passing of the years, however, a powerful countervailing trend toward sobriety has refashioned that image. Behind the lineaments of the exuberant hipster of the road we have begun to glimpse another persona, that of the tenderhearted and weak-willed cosmologist who was more often at its verge.

Kerouac was, in the tradition of his much adored Thomas Wolfe, a highly prolific writer. By the time of his death in 1969 he had published eighteen books, most of them novels, and a number of miscellaneous texts have been put out posthumously. Like Wolfe, he was irrepressibly autobiographical, to the point that the whole oeuvre can be seen—for better and for worse—as a translation of the least flicker of conscious experience into the peculiar amalgam of his prose. In the popular imagination he is often seen as a kind of non-doctrinaire Buddhist—a transcendental celebrant—but the grand sum of the works represents far less the meditations of a self divested of selfhood than the necessarily self-involved outpourings of a good Catholic boy on his knees before the confessional. More than for most, the work was the life and the life the work, and it is fitting that each side of the equation should now be given a volume of equal heft.

The salient facts of that life are by now fairly well-known. Jean Louis Lebris de Kerouac was born in 1922 in Lowell, Massachusetts, into a family of French-Canadian immigrants. He grew up in that factory town, solitary, dreamy and much scarred by the death of his older brother, Gerard, when he was 4 years old. Jack excelled at football, however, and he played at Horace Mann and at Columbia. But restlessness plucked him from school after a few semesters. He joined the Navy and then the Merchant Marine, serving for two years before he returned to New York.

In 1944 Kerouac began moving in what would become the "beat" orbit (he and writer John Clellon Holmes took credit for inventing the term "beat generation" in 1948), befriending Lucien Carr, William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg and a charismatic young drifter named Neal Cassady. For several years he worked away at a Wolfe-inspired novel that became *The Town and the City* (1950), his first published book. Then, in the late 1940s, Kerouac took his first cross-country trip with his bosom friend Cassady, who became the Dean Moriarty figure in *On the Road*. He tried to document their adventure in the more straightforward prose of his big novel but he was not pleased with the results. It was not until April, 1951 that Kerouac achieved his breakthrough—writing the whole novel onto a continuous roll of paper in three weeks' time, helped along by Benzedrine, the hipsters' drug of choice.

After writing *On the Road*, which wasn't published until 1957, Kerouac shifted his geographical center westward, spending much of his time in San Francisco and Mexico City. He met the poet Gary Snyder during this period, who served as the model for Japhy Ryder in *The Dharma Bums*, and began to study Buddhism. In the early 1950s, alternating bouts of adventuring with bouts of solitude, he wrote *Visions of Cody*, *Doctor Sax*, *Maggie Cassidy*, *The Subterraneans*, the poems of *Mexico City Blues* and *Tristessa*.

Charters's selection of letters takes us through 1956—not an arbitrary break-off point, for the very next year, with the publication of *On the Road*, Kerouac emerged into the public prominence that finally brought him less happiness and more vexation than he could have imagined. What we get, then, is Kerouac still off-stage. He is at once candid and full of youthful pretenses; he sounds, that is, like any number of eager young writers. And what we partake of seems very much the universal pattern of male literary self-making. Endless idealistic letters filled with fantasies of the future and enthusiastic—if not quite profound—philosophizing, as in this one to his friend Hal Chase in the spring of 1947:

> Because, after all, what is the ruling thought in the American temperament if it isn't a purposeful energetic search after useful knowledge. The "livelihood of man" in America instead of the vague and prosy "brotherhood of man" in Europe. My subject as a writer is of course America, and simply, I must know everything about it.... What does the study of thought amount to if you yourself don't think new thoughts?—and how are you to think new thoughts if you don't at first fire yourself with a new purpose. Well, my purpose is Balzacian in scope—to conquer knowledge of the U.S.A. (the center of the world for me just as Paris was at the center of the world for Balzac)—my purpose is to know it as I know the palm of my hand.

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Then, not long after, we glimpse the behind-the-scenes dynamics of the celebrated friendships between Kerouac, Cassady and Ginsberg. At one point, in a series of letters to Cassady, Kerouac undertakes a complete self-accounting, beginning at birth and omitting very little that followed. A testimony to their mutual bewitchment, their deep "digging" of each other, these letters are a kind of microcosm of the larger Kerouac enterprise of a comprehensive documentation of his life. Dare I say we would not wish it longer?

Dear Neal,

Now to resume. After Gerard died (and I still have more to say about his death, in fact the moment he was lowered in the earth) there was a period when I did a great deal of ruminating in the Beau Lieu St. House even as everything was being readied to move Hildreth St. In the midst of bustling and packing, I sat in the brown gloomy parlor of 1926 and had what was probably my first soul-memories. In the first paper I told you I remembered the day of my birth even now: this I did, aged 4, for the first time. But I remembered still another occasion and with the same weight of heartfelt nostalgia that an adult will remember palmier years as he grows older. I remembered a long afternoon on Lupine Road when I was probably only 1 year old....

In addition to the rigors of this personal archaeology (and Cassady was similarly disinterring his past for Kerouac), there is a good deal of anxious and possessive discussion of the friendship itself, with percussive outbursts of jealousy when Ginsberg and Cassady appear to be getting too close. And we read of various plans for communal living. These come to naught, but as Kerouac discusses various possibilities—which must include arrangements for wives and, in his case, mother—we are brought up short. Somehow in the midst of all this obsessive dwelling on the state of their soul-bonds we have forgotten that these are not just ethereal comrades, but grown men with families. Indeed, by 1950 Kerouac was on his second marriage. I don't think that it's just editorial selection that keeps the wives—the womenfolk in general—out of the picture. The whole beat configuration was held together by the idealized and quasi-homoerotic codes of the *puer aeternus*. These were high voltage emotional circuits, and they functioned nicely without female impedances:

Because the private terms you use with Allen are not really understandable to me—I who have to conduct private terminologies with the Burfords and Chases and Whites [Denver friends of Kerouac's] of the world—and moreover, you and Allen seem to enjoy my confusion, or are indifferent to my intellectual understanding of you, desiring mainly my emotional presence and what you call "dignity." Which is alright with me, except that it has led to Allen's misunderstanding of me, and yours too in a slighter way. Allen exclaims that sadness, as a key to me, would transform me and redeem me completely in his eyes, which is really silly considering that we've known each other for years.... (I hope you won't show this letter to Burroughs, as he considers himself too grown up for these things, and I want to keep his respect through other means.)

Wild road warriors, yes, but the atmosphere here is more hot-house boarding school than anything else.

The letters do comprise an important document, though for many that importance must be measured subjectively: it has everything to do with how interested one is in the oscilloscopic readings of Kerouac's relationships and his evolving self-image as a writer. But this is the condition placed on all collections of letters, Bloomsbury as well Bohemia. Their ultimate value is connected to the perceived significance of the correspondent as artist, and in Kerouac's case this is a matter of debate.

Charters prefaces *The Portable Jack Kerouac* with the customary rationale for the existence of such a volume (it is handy, it makes a good introduction, it allows the reader to track the career) and also affirms that Kerouac himself had dreamed of such a gathering of his work. He went so far as to view his ongoing endeavor as making up a kind of Proustian remembrance, and believed that this could be clarified by judicious excerpting from the books. Alas, the Proustian has here met the Procrustian, and while the volume does serve as a handy overview, or digest, it does not finally serve Kerouac's cause of being seen as a major writer. Context was this writer's preferred environment. To "get" him you have to be there, soaking in the atmosphere and handing yourself over to the prose rhythms. When his extended effusions are truncated like this (often only several pages from a given book), they make a naked lunch on the end of the fork. *The Portable Jack Kerouac* reminds us—or reveals to us—how tedious and self-absorbed this writer often was.

The *Portable* seeks to inscribe what Kerouac himself called "The legend of Duluoz"—Duluoz being yet another self-psuedonym, this one picked consciously to echo Joyce's "Deadalus." The excerpts are arranged according to the chronology of the life, not necessarily in the order of the writing. Thus we begin with a small bit from *Doctor Sax* (1952) in which the hero's birth is recounted, and continue on with, among other selections, parts of *Maggie Cassidy* (1953), about Kerouac's high school love affair, *On the Road*, *The Subterraneans* (1953), *The Dharma Bums* (1957), *Desolation Angels* (1961) and *Big Sur* (1961). Charters provides the name identifications

Shells

Scalloped synecdoches of satin cloud,
breezes from the Gulf, the creak of wings
(pelicans, egrets, sandpipers), whole coast
portable, rinsable, set out to dry

on towel-draped stools in late afternoon.
Or was the waxing moon already up?
The soft sky throbbed in one long single note
deepening till evening was sore.

Glimmering memento scribbled on a slate
held up between a finger and a thumb,
dry in a twinkling: apricot and pearl
or blurry madras; burgundy and cream,

distaff or wing shape, scoop or lobe or drill.
Listen. A tiny thread of siren song,
note of an unseen bird, or a child's call
to a grandparent (this last the sign

of an affection still reciprocal).
Turning away from the exchange, I drift
over to take a towel, to rinse ... and then
immediately forget the feeble errand

and find myself drawn back to the warm water.
They cradle me, these fluent twists of color.
A pale pink shell's unspeaking guarantee
cups a kind of convoluted promise

not that the dead will visit—they are dead.
But while we living bathe in such mild air,
neither will I rinse them from my mind,
beloved bones dismantled into sand.

RACHEL HADAS

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for each section, so that we know that Ginsberg, say, is Irwin Garden in one work, Adam Moorad in another and Alvah Goldbook in yet a third. There is, in addition, a selection of Kerouac's poetry, of his miscellaneous prose, including short essays on the beats and on Buddhism, and a small clutch of letters.

Charters does not include any sample from Kerouac's much labored-over first novel, *The Town and the City*, contending that the author, under the sway of Wolfe, had not yet found his voice. The implication would be that in the other selections he *has* found his voice, though a sequential reading reveals many different approaches and tonal registers. There is hardly space here to track the mutations. What matters most is the dominant Kerouac idiom, the so-called "spontaneous bop prosody" that he claimed to have discovered in 1951 and that allowed him to rewrite his previous version of *On the Road* so rapidly, and that then, though with the aforementioned variations, became his signature style. Its most familiar expression, of course, is that novel, though one can open the *Portable* almost anywhere and find it. Here, for instance, is a passage from *The Dharma Bums*:

> Then suddenly everything was just like jazz: it happened in one insane second or so: I looked up and saw Japhy *running down the mountain* in huge twenty-foot leaps, running, leaping, landing with a great drive of his booted heels, bouncing five feet or so, running, then taking another long crazy yelling yodelaying sail down the side of the world and in that flash I realized *it's impossible to fall off mountains you fool* and with a yodel of my own I suddenly got up and began running down the mountain after him doing exactly the same huge leaps, the same fantastic runs and jumps, and in the space of about five minutes I'd guess Japhy Ryder and I (in my sneakers, driving the heels of my sneakers right into the sand, rock, boulders. I didn't care any more I was so anxious to get down out of there) came leaping and yelling like mountain goats or I'd say like Chinese lunatics of a thousand years ago, enough to raise the hair on the head of the meditating Morley by the lake, who said he looked up and saw us flying down and couldn't believe it. In fact with one of my greatest leaps and loudest screams of joy I came flying right down to the edge of the lake and dug my sneaker heels into the mud and fell just sitting there, glad.

This is good, vivid writing, riding on the strength of its verbs, its depunctuated thrusts of action, and the contagious good spirits of its narrator. Kerouac is doing what he does best, catching a moment, tagging it with gleeful hyperbole ("crazy yelling yodelaying sail down the side of the world"), and yanking the reader along by making him feel like a spoilsport if he stays behind with his red pencils and grammars.

But Kerouac didn't understand the limits of the mode. It burst from his pen like a spray from a shaken can, and much of the time we have the unsettled feeling that our author is unwittingly parodying himself:

> Meanwhile the sunsets are mad orange fools raging in the gloom, whilst far in the south in the direction of my intended loving arms of señoritas, snowpink piles wait at the foot of the world, in general silver ray cities—the lake is a hard pan, gray, blue, waiting at the mist bottoms for when I ride her in Phil's boat—Jack Mountain as always receives his meed of little cloud at highbrow base, his thousand football fields of snow all raveled and pink, that one abominable snowman still squatted petrified on the ridge....

Part of the point of spontaneous bop prosody is writing very quickly, with minimal mediation by the censorious literary superego, but clearly not all things lend themselves equally to the notational approach.

Kerouac is not, finally, much of a stylist. He had a genuine gift for the single image, the evocative brush stroke, but he had no syntactic finesse at all. The phrases agglomerate into sentences into paragraphs into sections into books, but the logic is basically serial: *and then, and then*.... Yet he truly believed (as do many of his apologists and his exegetes) that he was enacting some prose revolution, infusing the written line with jazz. But jazz, certainly the bebop jazz he favored, is not extension; it is about the compression and complication of the melodic sense—is, in short, about syntax. In some deep and fundamental way, Kerouac did not understand this. He acted as if jazz meant playing the melody fast and relentlessly and with goggle-eyed fervor. It was not in him to subordinate, to layer, to subject his materials to the shaping agencies of higher imagination. No elisions, no great silences, no elegant or startling foreshortenings, just Ginsberg's "boxcars, boxcars, boxcars."

Jack Kerouac began in Lowell, Massachusetts, and he came full circle, living there the last few years of his life before dying in Florida. If a second volume of letters is published, it will show, I fear, an ecstatic temperament laid low by alcohol and melancholia. Much as the writer wished for acclaim, he was lost when it arrived. Fans pestered him to come out and swing with them. The liver couldn't take it. Kerouac's lifelong reliance on alcohol caught up with him, ravaging his body and sapping his creative will. By the time of *Big Sur* (1961)—and remember, Kerouac was not yet 40—he had the defeated voice of someone broken by life:

> Back at the cabin I cant chop wood for fear I'll cut a foot off, I cant sleep, I cant sit, I cant pace, I keep going to the creek to drink water till finally I'm going down there a thousand times making Dave Wain wonder as he comes back with more wine—We sit there slugging out of our separate bottles, in my paranoia I begin to wonder why I get to drink just the one bottle and he the other—But he's gay "I am now going out surf castin and catch us a grabbag of fish for a marvelous supper; Romana you get the salad ready and anything else you can think of; we'll leave you alone now" he adds to gloomy me and Billie thinking he's in our way, "and say, why don't we go to Nepenthe and *pri*vate our grief tonight and enjoy the moonlight on the terrace with Manhattans, or go see Henry Miller?"—"No!" I almost yell, "I mean I'm so exhausted I don't wanta do anything or see anybody..."

It may be spontaneous, but there's little bop and less prosody.

As he neared the end of his days, Kerouac was a wreck. He grew bitter and unattractively conservative, railing against the hippies and declaring himself a "bippie in the middle." But ends like Kerouac's are pointless to dwell upon; they do not cancel the riots that led up to them. Once the mind has rendered its estimates and professed its disappointments, the reading self is free to spring back to the first encounter, to the prose, such as this passage from *On the Road*, that once seemed to herald the very morning of things:

> Incidentally, a very beautiful Colorado gal shook me that cream; she was all smiles too; I was grateful, it made up for last night. I said to myself, Wow! What'll *Denver* be like! I got on that hot road, and off I went in a brand-new car driven by a Denver businessman of about thirty-five. He went seventy. I tingled all over; I counted minutes and subtracted miles. Just ahead, over the rolling wheatfields all golden beneath the distant snows of Estes, I'd be seeing old Denver at last. I pictured myself in a Denver bar that night, with all the gang, and in their eyes I would be strange and ragged and like the Prophet who has walked across the land to bring the dark Word, and the only word I had was "Wow!"

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Machoball soup

AS A BOY, I WAS PRETTY GOOD with a knife. I carved wood, I cut line, I cleaned fish, I hurled my finely weighted, mother-of-pearl-handled pocketknife with cool accuracy, blade-first, usually in competition with the other nice Jewish boys who summered in the same hills and woods, and once with deadly accuracy, right between the eyes of a copperhead snake that threatened a friend who was trapped on a rock in a brackish corner of Swan Lake. I was a local hero after that exploit, but only until the sun started to set, when I put my tiny weapon tenderly away, since it was forbidden to me on the Sabbath. In the city, of course, I enjoyed no expression of my Jim Bowie fantasies. In the city, a knife was not what *we* carried. We were not, most of us, timid. We just didn't like violence; it was pitiable and it was goyish. Once a year I picked up a knife, a serrated one, in the happy kitchen of my parents on the eve of Passover, to slice apples and to chop walnuts, for the purpose of producing the disagreeable paste that would represent, a few hours later, the mortar that made the bricks that made the cities that the Jews built in their bondage.

NOW DAVID MAMET HAS WRITTEN a short story about the knife and the mortar, in a little book called *Passover*. It is a typical Mamet contraption: banality followed by apocalypse followed by a trick. A granddaughter is slicing and chopping with a grandmother, and making Hebrew school patter about the preparation for the seder, but there is no joy in this kitchen. There is only dread. The girl is fascinated by the knife. It holds a secret.

> "You said that this wasn't the same knife," the girl said.
> "No. That knife was lost."
> "Would you tell me about it?"
> "... My *grandmother*," the woman said, "had come back to their house on Erev Pesach. You see?"
> "That's right. In the *shtetl*."
> "... she'd gone to the market. And she heard there was going to be an *attack*..."
> "A *pogrom*," the child said.

It was the knife that saved the family's life, the child learns. The grandmother's grandmother used the knife to destroy her own home, ripping the pillows and smashing the windows, slitting the throats of chickens and spreading the blood, and her bloody handprints, everywhere, and hiding the menfolk, in this way fooling the murderers; and so the pogrom passed over, and "*her* house was spared." This is "the traditional end of the story." But Mamet's story is a few lines longer:

> They heard the sound of the key in the door. But neither moved. The old woman went to the child and pulled her head toward her, and stroked her hair once, and again, and then kissed the top of her head; and then they both turned to the sound of activity in the entranceway.

End of story. It can happen here. Have a nice holiday.

PASSOVER MAY BE READ as the sequel to *Homicide*, a dead and ugly movie that Mamet wrote and directed in 1991, about a cop who discovers his Jewishness in the course of his investigation of the murder of an old Jewish woman in a candy store. "It never stops," the murdered woman's grandaughter tells the cop. "What is it that never stops?" he demands to know. "Against the Jews," she replies. He doesn't believe her. Then he is summoned to the grieving family's tony apartment because they say that a man on the roof shot at them. He doesn't believe them. "You're dealing with what? Hysterical Jews?" Mrs. Klein retorts. "We're making it up, right? We're always making it up!" And then Mr. Klein: "It's always a fantasy, isn't it, when someone wants to hurt the Jews?" And then Ms. Klein: "Do you hate yourself so much? Do you belong nowhere?" That does it. The cop is called to the tribe. It doesn't hurt that almost everybody he meets that day calls him a yid or a kike, or that the person with the answers is a leggy brunette dressed slickly in black. He begins to believe that the old lady was murdered because she ran guns to Palestine in 1946. He attends a secret meeting of a Jewish underground in which a crew of paunchy and balding Jewish men with heavy sighs and heavy accents mutter about guns and Hebron and loyalty. "I would do anything," he tells them. He hears Hebrew. "Whatever you're doing," he pleads with the woman in black, "let me help." And so he blows up an anti-Semitic printing press in the back of a toy store.

IT TURNS OUT THAT OUR HERO was being used, but the foul fundamentals of Mamet's Jewishness are clearly established. The whole world wants the Jews dead. There is no difference between the paranoid view of the world and the Jewish view of the world. History has left the Jews no choice but to die or to kill. Violence is a lovely and legitimate expression of Jewish identity. A kind of secular Kahanism, pure and simple. Mamet is the latest in a long line of Jews who owe their Jewishness entirely to anti-Semitism. In Mamet's case, though, the religion of tough guys is especially virulent.

FOR MAMET ADDS A GENDER PRIMITIVENESS to an ethnic primitiveness. "It is expected," he once observed in the journal of Jewish thought called *Penthouse*,

By Michael McCurdy for *Passover*

> that we and our fellows will strive and succeed in the traditional pursuits of a landless people, in the pursuits of the mind. But a Jewish *football player* ... that person would stand as a magnificent and welcome freak. That person is is an image which gets the heart beating a bit faster with pride.

And he once wrote an essay comparing his desire for Jewish authenticity to his desire for a great body. "What was so shameful about wanting a better physique?" For Mamet, Jewishness is not for sissies. It is another form of virility. He is sick and tired of intelligent Jews who don't have the *kneidlakh* to stand up and fight. He is a real Jew who says "fuck" a lot.

THIS IS THE SORT OF IDENTIFICATION with the oppressed that is really an identification with the oppressor. In the history of the relationship between persecution and testosterone, after all, testosterone was the problem, not the solution. But the Jew-brute is ignorant of all this, and a good deal else. And so he can compose these unbelievable sentences:

> God bless those in all generations who have embraced their Jewishness. We are a beautiful people and a good people, and a magnificent and ancient history lives in our literature *and lives in our blood*; and I am reminded of Marcus Garvey's rhetoric, in addressing the black populace: "Up you Mighty Race, you Race of kings, rise to your feet, you can accomplish what you will."

Hey, blood boy. We *are* on our feet. Our fuckin' feet. And in our hands ... look. Can you fuckin' see it? A *book*. Can you read it? Yeah, you. *It*. Such beauty in the brains. Happy fuckin' Pesach.

LEON WIESELTIER

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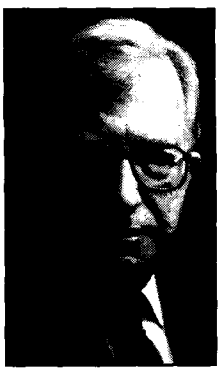
Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

The Most Important Lesson

Ask the American public about the Number One school problem and you get a clear answer: violence and disorder. Of course the public knows that there is violence everywhere and some of it is bound to take place in schools. What it cannot understand is why students who are known to be violent and who come to school with weapons or drugs are permitted to stay in school after a mild punishment or no punishment at all. Nor can they understand why students who destroy the education of all the others by ongoing disruption—shouting obscenities, hitting or threatening to hit other students or the teacher—remain in class.



Why can't schools act more like rational and loving parents?

A few weeks ago, I visited a private school for children with severe disabilities in Washington, D.C. The principal, who is also a professor at a nearby university, often visits city schools. She told me of a school where a severely disturbed student constantly strikes out at kids sitting near him and tries to injure them. He's also a firebug. People in the school are terrified, but in that school he remains. The law about educating children with disabilities does not permit suspension, expulsion or change of placement without the permission of the parents or the courts, and it might take the courts a year-and-a-half to decide the case. (Students who come to school with guns or commit violent acts and who are not designated as disabled at the time they commit the act can get retroactive protection by getting a doctor to say that they were suffering under a disability at the time—much like the use of the insanity defense by murderers.) Meanwhile, the education and safety of the other students are at risk.

This makes no sense. Even a loving parent would not behave in this way. Suppose the violent, firebug child had brothers and sisters. Would their mother allow the problem child to endanger the lives and safety of the others? Would she say that separating the disturbed child from the others would unfairly label and stigmatize him? That it would destroy his self-esteem? Hell no! She would do what she could for her troubled son. She'd spend more time with him and she'd spend more on doctors. But she would also protect her other children from him. Why can't schools act more like rational and loving parents?

A good part of the reason is that we can no longer think straight on these issues. The very language we use has become twisted and distorted. Remember George Orwell's 1984? People in the society Orwell describes cannot think straight because they have been taught, from childhood on, that "war is peace" and "freedom is slavery." We have a similar Orwellian language which paralyzes thought in our schools.

On March 8 the New York Times reported that Schools Chancellor Ramon Cortines plans to remove students carrying weapons from their regular schools for a year: "The older ones would be sent to four-year disciplinary academies ... and students as young as kindergartners would be segregated in disciplinary programs." The article points out that this action reverses "a two-decade policy of allowing principals and school district superintendents to determine punishment for armed or violent students. Many students, even those with guns, are now suspended for a week or so and then allowed back into the school." The Cortines proposal seems reasonable, doesn't it? It "brought support from some board members and many students and parents. But others, including children's advocates, said they are concerned that the measures ... may be trampling on students' rights."

"What would they do if a five-year-old comes to school with a gun?" asked a representative of Advocates for Children: "There are so many things to be concerned about, but suspending the child seems to me so far from what our concern should be." Enter George Orwell. Child advocate? Advocate for all the children or advocate for the right of a violent firebug to endanger the lives of other kids? Ignore a five-year-old with a gun? What are we teaching him? That it's O.K. to bring a gun to school! If these are the child advocates, is Ramon Cortines anti-child?

It's time we took our language back. It is Cortines and the parents, students and teachers supporting him who are the child advocates. They are fighting for the safety and education of children. And they want to teach the five-year-old with a gun the most important lesson a school can teach—that his action has consequences and he is responsible for what he does.

Cortines is helping save public education. Many parents want vouchers to send their kids to private schools not because these schools have better teachers or a better curriculum but because guns and bad behavior are not tolerated there. It would be a terrible shame if we pushed 98 percent of the kids—those who want to learn—into private schools because of the two percent who are a threat. Instead, let's isolate the two percent so the others will stay.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1995 by Albert Shanker.

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